

## WHAT IS A BULLY?

Someone who purposely tries to hurt others by:

- ✓ Making them feel uncomfortable.
- ✓ Kicking/hitting.
- ✓ Name-calling.
- ✓ Spreading nasty rumors.



## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can take place in person, through notes left on desks or lockers, text messages, or online via email or social media. It can range from verbal insults to physical violence, and usually occurs over an extended period of time.

**Problems Muslim Students Face:**

- ✓ Pulling of headscarf or kufi.
- ✓ Pressure to convert to another religion.
- ✓ Insulting comments about Islam made in the classroom.
- ✓ Physical abuse.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

State law requires your school to protect you from harassment and discrimination:

Schools **MUST** prohibit bullying based on religion, race, and nationality.

Schools **MUST** make their bullying policy public.

Schools **MUST** have a process in place for investigating complaints of bullying. If you tell a teacher or another adult at school that you are getting bullied, they have to do something to help you.



## MUSLIM STUDENTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**"I WISH** people at school would understand that even when they joke about calling me a terrorist, I don't really think it's funny."

**"I WISH** that people would understand that although my parents raised me Muslim, they didn't make me wear hijab. It was my choice.

**"I WISH** people were more open about learning more about the real Islam and not the kind of Islam they show on TV. or on the news."



## DRESS CODE



- ✓ You have the right to wear your hijab or kufi at public school, even if there is a dress code or uniform requirement.
- ✓ If you do not wish to participate in school activities that would require you to remove your hijab, such as swimming, your school must provide an alternative activity for you.

## HOLIDAYS AND PRAYER



- ✓ Schools cannot penalize students for missing school on religious holidays. You can request the day off in advance for Eid holidays.
- ✓ You are allowed to pray individually or as a group during the school day. CAIR-NY advises you to choose a time to pray that does not coincide with school activities or class time.
- ✓ A school isn't required to provide a designated prayer room but can indicate what areas are available to students for prayer.
- ✓ You may be permitted to leave school for juma'ah (Friday prayer). You must coordinate with school officials if you wish to do this.

## STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ✓ Use any ignorance you encounter as an opportunity to educate others about your beliefs. But if someone repeatedly makes offensive comments about Islam, report it.
- ✓ Learn more about and be proud of your faith.
- ✓ Volunteer to give a presentation on Islam on school-sponsored diversity days.
- ✓ Know that your real friends will stand by you.

## DO'S AND DON'TS IF YOU ARE BULLIED

### DO...

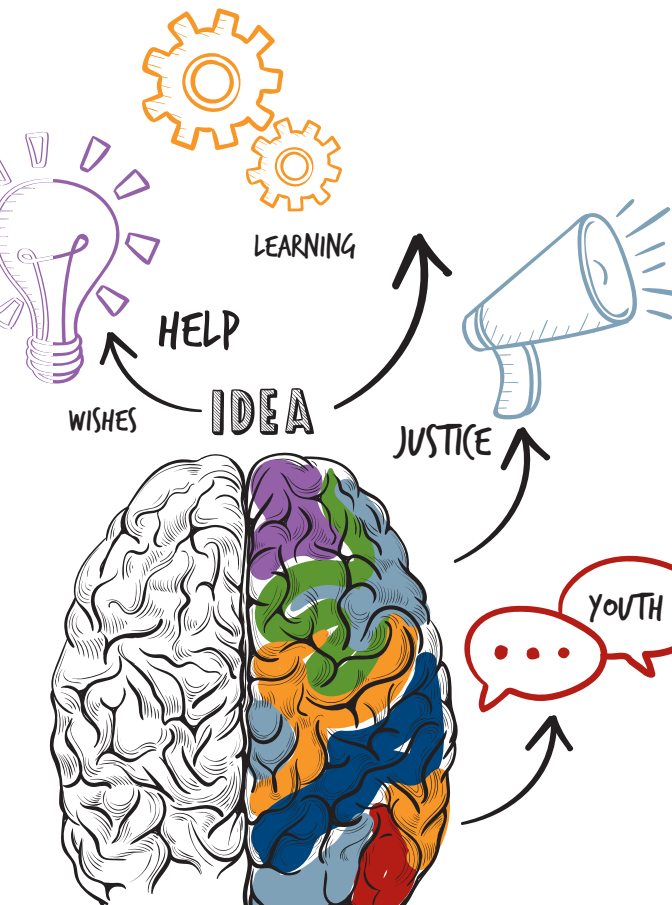
- ✓ Report to a teacher or other trusted adult at school; your school has a legal responsibility to protect you.
- ✓ Let your parents know if you are being bullied or know of someone who is being bullied.

### DO NOT...

- ✓ Feel ashamed or embarrassed. It is not your fault.
- ✓ Retaliate with violence or name-calling: this could result in you being punished, rather than the bully.



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A MUSLIM YOUTH AT SCHOOL



## WORKING WITH TEACHERS

Some Muslim students have reported that teachers treat them differently based on their faith or country of origin.



## IF...

- ✓ a teacher makes a false statement about Islam, respectfully raise the issue during or after class.
- ✓ any of the following situations occur, report it to your parents and the principal:
  - a teacher prohibits or punishes you for wearing your hijab or kufi.
  - a teacher makes fun of your name, country of origin, or religion, even in a joking way.
  - a teacher suggests that you should convert to a different religion.

## WHAT CAIR-NY CAN DO TO HELP



CAIR-NY can advise you on how to address your situation.

- ✓ CAIR-NY can accompany you to meetings with administrators or contact them on your behalf.
- ✓ CAIR-NY can help you file a complaint if school administrators aren't taking effective action to stop the bullying.
- ✓ CAIR-NY can help connect you to resources about your faith, which you can share with administrators and teachers.
- ✓ CAIR-NY can help connect you to counseling services to deal with the stress of bullying.
- ✓ Even if you do not wish for CAIR-NY to take action in your situation, it is still important to report what is happening, especially if your situation is like something described above. The more CAIR-NY knows about what Muslim youth at school face, the better equipped the community can be to solve problems.

## REMEMBER

# BULLYING

in all forms **SHOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED** by you or your school.

**DO NOT CUT YOURSELF OFF AND THINK**

you **MUST** handle bullying by yourself

**TALK TO A PARENT,**

A TEACHER, OR ANOTHER ADULT YOU TRUST. THEY ARE YOUR ALLIES.



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