

## Words have two meanings:

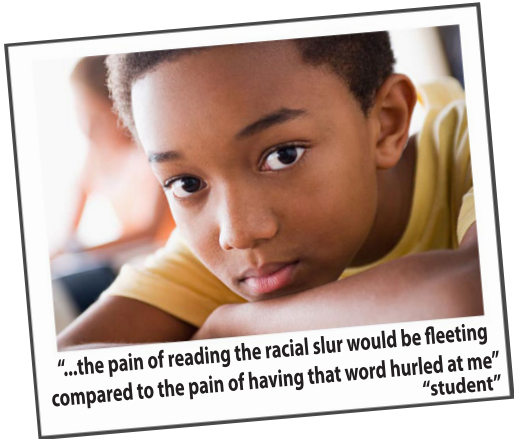
What you meant by it

*and*

What it means to the person who hears it; you don't get to choose how it felt or what it meant to the other person

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***Choose your words carefully  
and be kind.***



## Strategies:

If you are experiencing hurtful teasing, taunting, and name calling it is important to take care of yourself. Talk to a teacher, counselor, friend, or parent. It is also important to avoid the source of the hurtfulness until the situation is resolved. VPS teachers and counselors are committed to supporting students and want to contribute to the solution.

Similarly, if you see someone using words in a hurtful way, it is important to speak up to try to stop the meanness. Tell them to stop or go get help. If you are not sure how to do this, talk to a teacher or counselor. It is also helpful to talk to the person who was harmed. Sometimes just letting the person know you saw what happened and you didn't like it either can help.

## Bottom Line:

We want our schools to be emotionally safe places as well as physically safe. Students play an important role in establishing a supportive climate in their school. Get involved. Speak-up. Contribute in a positive way to your school.



August 2015

**Change Your *WORDS*  
and  
Change Your *WORLD***



## Have you ever been...

- called stupid, ugly, or other degrading names?
- called a name because of your race, sex, or gender?

## If yes...

- Then you were experiencing verbal abuse, which is harassment.

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***Words can hurt***

***The bruises may not be visible,  
but the pain is real.***

**Words Matter**

- » Words have power and it is important that we not ignore, avoid or pretend that our words don't impact someone else
- » Positive words build up a person's self-esteem
- » Negative words hurt and tear down a person's self-esteem
- » Some words are not appropriate for the school setting
- » Using offensive language makes you look less intelligent, less caring and even cruel



**Name calling** is not allowed in our schools.

That means that at school no one should ever call another student or staff person, directly or indirectly, a derogatory name based on the perception of the student or staff member's race, color, religion, ancestry, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, or sensory disability.

We want our schools to be a safe place to learn. Please talk to your teacher, school counselor, or principal if you or someone you know has been a victim of harassment.



**Stereotypes:** Is believing that certain groups of people all act the same, that there is no individuality. In fact, there is a richness associated with the diversity.

- » Avoid making assumptions based on what you see
- » Make an effort to get to know people different than you
- » Think before you speak
- » Take the time to learn about other people and their culture
- » Don't laugh at racist, sexist, or other stereotypical jokes

