
Bullying - A Guide for Parents



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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is taken very seriously at our school, as we ensure an environment where everyone at school can work and learn without the fear of intimidation and abuse. All reported cases of bullying are investigated thoroughly and we ensure that all parties understand the consequences of their actions.

However, as a school we cannot monitor our pupils around the clock and we are fully aware that bullying can occur outside of school. This guide supports you in knowing the different types of bullying, signs that your child is being bullied and other agencies that can support you.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate in contacting our anti-bullying coordinator.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." Department for Education.

There are different types of bullying, which can include:

- **Physical** – This is a physical assault on someone which can range from intentionally knocking into someone to grievous bodily harm.
- **Emotional** – When someone's self-esteem and confidence is reduced through threatening behaviour, teasing and taunting about a specific aspect of their life, for example race or family background.
- **Verbal** – When language is used in an offensive or derogatory manner, such as swearing or 'banter'.
- **Social** – When a group ostracises an individual from a peer group.
- **Homophobic** – Any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexuals or transgenders or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- **Property** – Where an individual's personal property is deliberately attacked.
- **Cyber bullying** – Using electronic communications to target an individual or group through content posted on the Internet.

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE BEING BULLIED

Unless an individual has been physically assaulted, it can be difficult to spot the signs that someone is being bullied. Often, the emotional signs are harder to recognise and a child or young person may hide these. Some specific traits of someone being bullied are:

- Reluctance to go to school, offering excuses or feigning illness.
- Frightened about walking or taking public transport to school.
- Becoming withdrawn and significant changes in their behaviour.
- Attainment levels beginning to drop.
- Returning from school physically hurt and/or clothes torn or equipment damaged.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying has become an increasing problem over recent years, with children using electronic communication to bully others. It poses increasing problems for the victim, as often the perpetrator can be anonymous and they can target their victim outside of school.

Signs that your child may be the victim of cyber bullying may include a secretive use of the Internet, or a reluctance to go online. Unfortunately, many social media sites and apps can be used to cyber bully others and it is important to ensure that you set any privacy settings on these sites. In addition, many offer a BLOCK and REPORT facility where you can block an individual from sending hurtful messages and report them to the site administrator.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

If you think that your child is being bullied, there are some important strategies to take in order for them to overcome their worries and concerns. Being the victim of bullying can be very traumatic and you need to boost your child's confidence. Some practical strategies that you can take include:

- Talking to your child and listening to the problem. Praise them for talking about this issue.
- Collect any evidence, such as notes or screenshots from websites or apps. In addition, you might want to put together a timeline of when and where the incidents took place and who was present.
- If your child's property has been damaged, you may want to put together a list of items, including the monetary cost.
- Look at the ways forward, such as informing school so they can support you with any problems that are happening in the classroom, playground or getting to and from school.
- If your child has witnessed bullying, you should stress that they are not 'grassing' by telling people but they are being brave in supporting someone else in the class or school.

If you find out that your child is bullying others in school, some advice can include:

- Listening to their side of the story. It is important to stress that they are still your son or daughter, it is their behaviour that you are not happy with.
- Try not to use the word 'bully', as terms can stick with them. Ensure that they understand the impact of their actions on others.
- Finally, 'don't bully the bully'. Talk to them about any reasons why they are behaving in that way towards others.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Childline: www.childline.org.uk // call 0800 11 11

Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk // call 0808 800 2222

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk // call 020 7730 3300

Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org

