



Bullying- A Guide for Parents

Bullying is defined as **deliberately** hurtful behaviour, **repeated over a period of time**. The phrase used in school is **Several Times on Purpose (STOP)- then we TELL an adult**.

So, what do we do about bullying?

We help to stop bullying by:

- ☐ **Making sure that everyone understands the definition of bullying and that we all mean the same thing when we talk about bullying and that it is not just a 'one-off' or a 'falling out'**

It's sometimes really tricky to define behaviour as 'bullying', especially with younger children or pupils with additional needs who can find it difficult to express their feelings verbally and so sometimes 'hit out' when trying to get their point across or to express their feelings. Frequent 'rough play' amongst children can also be confused with deliberate bullying.

The main types of bullying are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking etc)
 - Verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
 - Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
 - Cyber bullying (online, texts, social media)
-
- ☐ **Helping children understand how bullying feels for the person being bullied.** In class the children have opportunities to discuss bullying, and teachers plan specific activities to help children empathise and give support to each other. During Anti- Bullying Week in November each year the whole school will focus on this as a theme.
 - ☐ **Making sure that children know exactly what to do if they are being bullied and that they are confident that something will be done about it.** In regular class times and in assembly times the system for reporting bullying is made clear to the children. If we suspect that bullying is taking place, we will always investigate and talk to all children involved to find out what exactly is going on. If we know a child is bullying others, then the behaviour policy sanctions will be used as appropriate, and parents will be contacted. If genuine bullying is happening, we may of course need time to investigate so that we have all the facts before us before any decisions are made.
 - ☐ **Celebrating diversity and tolerance.** Through teaching about Christian Values and promoting fundamental British Values we endeavour to help children to be tolerant and respectful.

Did you know?

The majority of children have been bullied, seen bullying or bullied themselves. There is no evidence that children are born 'bullies' or 'victims'

There **are** ways of changing bullying behaviour. Helping a bully understand their target's feelings and the effect of their behaviour on them (empathy), teaching them to stand up to peer pressure and giving them support to manage problems they are facing in their lives can change bullying behaviour for good.

What to do if you think your child is being bullied

Your child may not tell you that he or she is being bullied. If you suspect it may be happening, look out for these signs.

- Behaviour changes
- Withdrawal
- Not wanting to go to school
- Lots of stomach-aches, headaches, or non-specific illness.

Sometimes of course, these may be real ailments or signs of illness. You know your child better than anyone!

Worry needs to be taken seriously, whatever the reason. You can help by:

- helping your child to talk to you openly
- using books and TV/film plots to open discussions about bullying
- using puppets with younger children to help them talk about feelings
- praising your child for telling you and reassuring them
- reminding your child how they can manage their feelings. e.g. talking, distracting
- using your best listening skills. Accept their feelings and do not belittle what they say, however minor it seems
- not telling your child to 'fight back' as this could get them into trouble too.
- asking your child what they want to happen
- agreeing with your child that you may have to involve school and agreeing the best way to do this so as not to worry your child further
- alerting the school. It helps if you have any evidence, e.g. how often, who was involved, copies of texts/emails etc.
- not confronting children or other parents in the playground or contacting them on social media or by phone- that can add fuel to any situation and make it worse – especially for the children involved
- asking the school what will be done about it, and what we advise you to do.
- working with the school to make a plan which includes follow up conversations.

What to do if your child is bullying others

This can understandably be a shock to parents. Here are some helpful pointers.

- It is important to stay calm.
- Do not immediately dismiss the idea or rush into punishing your child severely.
- Try not to label them a bully. This label can stick, and we are all capable of bullying others at times.
- Your child is not a monster! Remind them that you love them. It the **behaviour** that you do not like.
- Listen to what they have to say. Arrange to see the teacher together
- Talk to them about how the other person feels
- Help them to develop confidence and make friends. Happy people don't need to bully others!

Why do children bully? Any one of these things may contribute:

- they want to be 'in' with the cool gang
- it feels like fun- they don't realise how much it hurts
- they dislike or are jealous of someone
- it makes them feel powerful or respected
- it gets them what they want
- they are bullied themselves and are taking out their anger on someone who won't fight back
- they are having problems in their life that are making them feel bad

How can parents help at home?

It is really important to:

- encourage and support your child in trying out the skills they are learning at school
- model using non-bullying behaviour yourself, and how to show respect for other people
- know what your child is learning about bullying at school

Unfortunately, as is clearly evident, no school can guarantee that bullying won't happen, but we can promise that it will be dealt with if we know it's going on. If bullying is happening outside of school that is tricky for us, but we can offer support in school if parents wish.

The key message is that school, children and parents should work together to stop bullying when it happens.



Helplines and websites:

www.childline.org.uk 0800 11 11

www.familylives.org.uk 0808 800 2222

www.bullying.co.uk