



Bullying

Find out how we
can support you
and your family



QUICK TIPS

Tips on how you
can help your child
deal with bullying

Bullying

When children and young people talk about their experience of being bullied, they're not talking about the normal give and take between young people. Many children are bullied for being 'different'. It could be due to being tall, small, thin, fat, red-headed, clever or having a disability, special needs or because of gender, religion, sexuality or race.

If 'normal socialisation' escalates to the point that it effects the emotional wellbeing of a child interfering with the rest of their life by:

- making them afraid
- unable to learn
- disturbing their sleep or eating patterns
- causing isolation
- low self-esteem
- depression.

Then this constitutes bullying: be it physical, verbal or indirect (for example, via mobile phones or the internet).

Signs that a child or young person may be experiencing bullying may include:

- excuses to miss school or skipping school
- torn clothes and school things missing or broken
- more bruises and scratches than usual.

Location

Bullying can take place anywhere, but it is most common at home or at school.

Bullying at home

Bullying at home can be extremely distressing. Home is ideally a safe place. It is important that the child tells someone they trust either within or outside the home and who will support them and put an end to the bullying. It could be a teacher, youth leader, pastoral worker or the parent of a friend.

Cyber-bullying also invades the home. Mobiles and the internet are used to bully others through:

- messages
- posts on social media
- explicit sexual pictures being passed around
- death threats.



Tips to help your child deal with cyberbullying

Ensure your child knows that they should try and seek advice and support from a trusted adult, family member or teacher on best ways of dealing with cyberbullying. Family Lives advises the following:

- don't reply
- show the message to someone you trust
- keep the message as evidence
- make a note of the sender's number or details
- contact the service provider

Advise your child: when sending texts or emails, never send anything you yourself would not like to receive.

Listening, understanding and supporting children who are displaying bullying behaviour is equally important to help them understand that bullying is unacceptable.



Bullying outside the home

Bullying can take place outside the home:

- on the way to or from school
- on the school bus
- in your local area (street, housing estate, park, shopping centre or anywhere else).

There may not be an obvious body or person to turn to. In situations involving bullying where schools or housing association representatives are unable to help, contact the police.

How you can help

As a parent or adult carer there are ways you can help:

- listen to your child
- reassure them that it is not their fault and that you will help them deal with it.

If your child is the bully:

- listening, understanding and supporting is equally important to help them understand that bullying is unacceptable.

Bullying at school

When possible, work with the school for a successful outcome. Speak to the teacher and arrange a follow-up appointment. If the teacher is not supportive speak to someone more senior or the head teacher.

If the bullying isn't resolved:

- Keep a written record of incidents and the person/people bullying, times and witnesses if possible
- Ask for a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy. (This is a legal requirement of schools)
- Send a letter to the head teacher including your record asking for a written response within a week to 10 days asking how they propose to deal with the situation. Keep copies of all correspondence. (Schools are legally required to respond to a letter)
- If a response is not received within the stated time, resend the letter with a copy to the Chair of Governors
- If a response is not forthcoming it may be necessary to go beyond the school
- Physical injuries should be recorded by your GP or A&E if severe. Keep details
- If the issue is still unresolved it may be necessary to involve the police.

In the majority of cases schools take bullying seriously and often have a range of support in place. Working alongside the school and keeping the staff in the school aware of the difficulties your child is experiencing is often enough to resolve the situation.

How schools can help

- Many schools have pupil councils who deal with bullying
- Mentors who are allocated to a child who needs some support
- Provide a named teacher who will support the child and also deal with the bully
- Run a buddy system where a child is allocated to befriend the child in need of support
- School counsellors who support and empower the child to deal with the bully in a different way, to help resolve the situation
- Arrange access to educational psychologists for further specialist support if required.



We're here when you need us

Contact us

Call our confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222

Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm

Weekends 10am to 3pm

Email us at: askus@familylives.org.uk

Or chat to us online

Monday to Friday 10.30am to 9pm

Online advice and resources:

Find advice, online parenting courses and our forums at www.familylives.org.uk

