



Bullying: information for parents



What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where a sense of powerlessness can make it difficult for the victim to defend him or herself.

Bullying can be:

Physical bullying.. *punching, kicking, stealing or hiding belongings, harassment*

Verbal bullying.....*name calling, teasing, taunts, threatening language*

Indirect bullying....*dirty looks, starting/ spreading rumours, excluding from groups, cyberbullying*



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Is your child being bullied?

It is not always possible to tell if a child is being bullied. The following signs **may** be indicative of a child being bullied:

- Feeling irritable, easily upset or particularly emotional.
- Coming home with damaged or missing clothes or possessions, without money they should have, or with scratches and bruises.
- Having trouble with school work for no apparent reason.
- Using a different route between home and school; asking to be taken to or picked up from school for no apparent reason.
- Headaches, stomach aches and perpetuated complaints of illness.

What if your child has been bullied?

- **The first and most important step is to listen.** Let them tell you in their own words. Don't respond by dismissing their experience as a part of 'growing up'.
- **Calmly talk with your child** about his/her experience.
- **Make a note of what your child says,** particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened.

- **Reassure your child** that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying.
- **Explain to your child** that should any further incidents occur he/she should report them to a teacher immediately
- **Make an appointment** to see your child's class teacher
- **Explain to the teacher** the problems your child is experiencing

What if your child is bullying others?

If your child is bullying others there may be something behind it – they may be trying to get attention or fit in with the crowd. They may not realise that they are hurting others.

- Sit down and talk with your child to find out what is happening.
- Ask your child how they think the bullying can be stopped.
- Reassure your child that you still love them as a person – it is the behaviour you would like them to change.
- Try to get to the root of the problem and find out what is upsetting them.
- Listen to your child's side of the story while also insisting that the bullying has to stop.
- Find out if there is a bigger problem – your child maybe scared of something, they may have been bullied themselves.



Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed or humiliated by another child using interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones

Cyber bullying is a growing concern for young people and it is important that parents are able to talk with their children about staying safe online and using the Internet and mobile phones responsibly.

Important points to discuss with children and young people:

- **Online relationships are no different from relationships off-line** – anonymity of being online or sending messages can take away the human element. Remember people online are still real people.
- **Be mindful that you are communicating differently** – it is easy to misinterpret what may be seen on the screen.
- **Be respectful of other people's privacy** – do not send messages, gossip or photos of people without asking them first.

- **Never give away personal information** – keep where you live, phone numbers and passwords private.
- **If you wouldn't say it, don't send it** – ask yourself if you would say this if the person was in front of you, if you answer no do not send it.
- **There's a history so it can be traced** – there's no such thing as anonymity, any messages you send could be saved or sent on by the recipient. You can also be traced through your IP address or SIM card.
- **Be polite** – everything you post online can be seen by someone and you never know who's reading it or who may have copied it and sent it on.



What should you do if your child is being cyber bullied?

It is worth keeping in mind that young people fear telling anyone that they are receiving nasty text messages, emails or any other malicious communications because they believe that they will have their mobiles or computers taken from them.

As a parent it is important that you:

- Don't panic
- Assure them they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Listen to what your child has to tell you and get the facts – what was said; how long it has been going on for, are they being bullied in the 'real' world?
- Decide a plan of action WITH your child – it is important that they feel involved and experience an element of control.
- Go through messages they have received and kept – if you feel they may be illegal keep copies and take them to the police.
- Ask them not to open any further online or text messages from these addresses or phone numbers, but to allow you to open them instead.
- Change their mobile number
- Change their online profile – ensuring their profiles are marked private.

Useful Contacts

Cardiff Against Bullying:

Telephone: 029 2061 7632

Email: CAB@cardiff.gov.uk

Childline:

Telephone: 0800 11 11

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre:

Website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Advisory Centre for Education:

Advice line: 0808 800 5793

Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Approaching your child's school

By law schools must have an anti bullying policy which outlines the measures they will take to prevent bullying and the procedures they will take to respond to incidents of bullying. Below is some advice on how to approach the school to discuss the problems your child is experiencing:

- Talk to your child about what is happening
- Plan what you want to say
- Make appointments to see the right people – start with your child's teacher. If you are not satisfied with their response arrange to see the head of year, deputy head, the head teacher and then the governors
- Ask a family member or friend to go with you if you feel nervous
- Count to ten and take a deep breath before you speak to anyone – avoid doing anything in the heat of the moment
- Focus on your child's feelings – if a child is upset it has to be taken seriously
- Ask everyone involved to work together to solve the problem
- Discuss what action will be taken and write this down
- Take things one step at a time. Arrange to see the teacher again in a few days time to discuss progress. Say you will talk with your child every day to check progress.
- Find out if there are any pupil support schemes in the school that can help to support your child.

