

Top tips for parents on bullying



Parents have a vital role to play in ensuring that young people do not suffer at the hands of bullies, or become bullies themselves.

NSPCC 
Dim mwyl o greulondeb i blant. DIM.
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

What is bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying, but most people consider bullying to be something that is deliberately hurtful and is often repeated over a period of time. However, it is important to note that one off incidents can also leave children feeling traumatised. Amongst other things the types of bullying that children and young people have talked to us about include name calling, threats, physical violence, leaving other children out, damage to property and nasty texts and emails.

Is your child being bullied?

It is difficult to be 100 per cent sure that a child is being bullied, but here are some signs to look out for.

Has your child been:

- Coming home with damaged or missing clothes, without money they should have, or with scratches and bruises?
- Having trouble with school work for no apparent reason?
- Reluctant to go to school or out to play?
- Feeling irritable, easily upset or particularly emotional?

How to help a bullied child

As a parent you may feel angry and upset if you discover that your child is being bullied. Here are some pointers that might help you deal with the situation:

- The first and most important step is to listen to your child. Don't dismiss their experience as part of growing up. It is a good idea to suggest that your child keep a diary of bullying incidents so they have concrete facts to show the school if necessary.
- Talk to your child about what to do next. Although tempting, do not rush into anything as it may make the situation worse.
- No-one can tackle bullying on their own and you shouldn't suffer in silence. Effective solutions normally require involving teachers, parents, and above all, the children themselves.
- If your child is happy for you to do so, make an appointment with a teacher with your child. Remember that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied, or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take and stay in touch with the school. Let them know if things improve or if they continue.
- If you are not satisfied with the teachers response do not give up. The welfare of your child is important, and if your child is being bullied then other children probably are as well.
- If you suspect that your child is being bullied but they are afraid to say anything you could speak to one of your child's friends or suggest that they talk to another adult. Children also often ring ChildLine about bullying.

Is your child a bully?

It can be very upsetting to be told that your child is bullying other children. However, it is important to talk to your child to help them modify their behaviour as well as to reassure your child that you still love and support them. It could be that there is a reason that your child is behaving in this way. For example, has there been a recent disruption or change in your child's life? Is life at home difficult? Is your child being bullied as well? The bullied and bullying are not always two distinct groups.

If your child has been bullying others obviously that behaviour has to stop. Try talking to your child. If your school has a good anti-bullying policy, your child will be able to seek help there.

How to work with your child's school to tackle bullying

Bullying takes place both inside and outside school, so it is vital that parents and teachers work together to help prevent it. Try to be assertive with the school but not aggressive. Without a good working relationship between parents and teachers the situation is likely to deteriorate. Here are some suggestions of how to work together:

- All schools have a responsibility to have a written anti bullying policy. Are you aware of your schools policy?
- Do you know who to go to at the school if your child is being bullied? You could find out who the schools anti-bullying coordinator is.
- Are all school staff, including non-teaching staff, involved in training on bullying?
- How does your school help children who are being bullied as well as those who are bullying?
- Be realistic of your expectations of the school. It may take time to resolve problems.

Technological bullying

Technological bullying, which is otherwise known as cyber bullying, is when a child is threatened, teased or embarrassed by someone else using the internet, mobile phones or other technologies. Whilst modern technologies have created great new opportunities for our children, there has also been a sharp increase in the number of children being bullied through the internet or mobile phones. Technological bullying can have particularly devastating effects on a child. Here are a few tips to help prevent technological bullying, and what to do if it happens:

- Keep the computer in a room where the whole family can use it.
- Tell your child not to reply to abusive text messages. Their mobile service provider should have a number that you can ring to report abusive messaging.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Save these as evidence.
- Contact your child's school. If the bullying is occurring through your school's internet system they have an obligation to intervene and they may have policies surrounding mobile phones.
- Contact the police if the bullying involves acts such as threats of violence, obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages, harassment, stalking, or hate crimes or child pornography.

Further information

If you need further advice about your child and bullying you can call the NSPCC Cymru/Wales Helpline on: 0808 100 2524 or email: helplinecymru@nspcc.org.uk

If your child would like to talk to someone in confidence about bullying, or any other issue they are concerned about, they can call ChildLine on: 0800 1111.

For further information about bullying go to:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

www.wrecsam.gov.uk/english/links/kids_safe.htm

www.nspcc.org.uk/Under18/Bullying/Bullying_wda38474.html

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