

FULL OF LIFE MINI GUIDE

BULLYING



WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when one person, or a group of people, where there is an imbalance of power, intentionally act in a harmful way towards an individual.

Some children are more vulnerable to bullying- children with SEN/Disabilities, or Looked- After children for example. Some children may be targeted for bullying because of their race, religion or sexual orientation.

Bullying can take different forms- name calling/verbal assaults, physical/sexual violence, or threats and intimidation. It can occur in person or online.

Bullying is not a one-off disagreement, or an accident resulting in injury. It is something that occurs repeatedly.

In any case, bullying is unacceptable.

FOR PARENTS/CARERS:

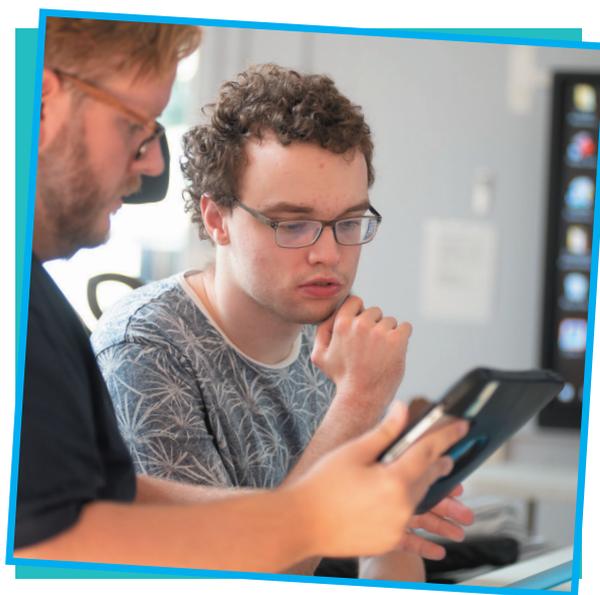
Some signs your child may be experiencing bullying:

Physical – bruises or other marks, broken or missing possessions/money

Behavioural/Emotional – changes in behaviour such as becoming more confrontational or withdrawn, eating noticeably more or less than usual, changes in sleep patterns, bed wetting, and avoidance of school or other activities which they previously enjoyed.

If your child is regularly coming home with unexplained bruises or marks, you may want to consider taking them to the GP, and you should inform your social worker (if you have one). You should also notify your child's school and ask them for any incident reports they may have in relation to your child.

If you believe that your child is being bullied, try not to panic. It is best not to encourage them to retaliate either. Reassure them that the bullying is not their fault. If you can, talk with your child calmly about how you can respond to the situation.



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SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

All state schools (not private schools) have a requirement to set out measures to prevent bullying in their school behaviour policy. Some schools have a specific anti-bullying policy. All schools should take bullying seriously and act if bullying is suspected.

If you think your child is being bullied, speak to their class teacher or headteacher in the first instance and explain your concerns. Try and approach this reasonably and without immediately assigning blame. This will probably be difficult, but it will help you to communicate more effectively with the school or college.

Schools will have a proportionate response to bullying depending on the severity of the incidents.

Here are some things schools can do where bullying is suspected: keep a closer eye on your child and their relationships with other children, monitor key areas more closely e.g. the toilets, institute a "buddy bench" or buddy system in the playground, sanction the child/children who are bullying and/or involve their parents.

Some schools may involve the police if the bullying taking place is of a criminal nature. For example, severe threatening behaviour, harassment, or hate crime.

If you have informed your child's school about bullying and are not satisfied with the way they responded, you can make a complaint.

IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED:

Please consider talking with someone about it. Being bullied makes you feel awful and it can be really difficult to manage it on your own. You can tell any adult that you trust- your parents, another family member, a teacher, or a friend of the family. If you aren't comfortable with this you can always call Childline 0800 11 11 or go to www.childline.org.uk.

If you can, keep some evidence of what is happening: write it down in a diary, making sure to include when it happened (specific dates and times) and who was there.

If the bullying is happening online, please try to keep the evidence – save or copy any photos, videos, texts, e-mails or posts.

Anti-Bullying Alliance has lots of practical information about preventing bullying and what to do if you, or your child/young person is being bullied.

It also has a helpful guide for teaching assistants on preventing bullying in school.

Here is a link to their website:

<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

There are numerous other sources of advice and support around bullying; here are a few:

<https://www.antibullyingpro.com>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/bullying>

<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>

The logo for 'Stand Up To Bullying' features a stylized blue figure with arms raised above the text 'STAND UP TO BULLYING' in bold, black, uppercase letters.



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