

“It happens most days. They call me smelly and fat. They made me give them money again yesterday. They’re in the same class and they’re always laughing at me. They said if I tell it will be 10 times worse. Sometimes I don’t go to school.....I can’t stand it anymore”

Bullying is a frightening experience. It can isolate and damage a young person’s self-confidence. Some ongoing bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression and, in some cases, self harm and / or suicidal thoughts and actions.

School days are a time when the influence of other children is very important and picked on and bullied. Sadly, we still live in a society where to be different in any way - such as ethnicity, sexual orientation or a disability - can mean ridicule and bullying. This behaviour is often copied by young people from their parents, which means that prejudice could continue into the next generation. It is crucial to be alert to the possibility of bullying and to make sure you know the signs.



You may think your child is unlikely to be bullied but the reality is that bullying can happen at any time to any child. Bullies who continuously harm others may need support and help as well. They may have experienced difficulties of their own at home, which may have led to their actions. Reporting concerns may help bullies get help as well.

- Bullying can happen anywhere, but most commonly it happens in school.
- Bullying can take many forms, from verbal abuse to physical attack.
- Bullying is the repeat abuse of a child by one or several people.
- Bullies are not always older than the child they harm.
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.

If your child tells you about a friend or any other child who is being bullied, listen carefully and take it seriously. That child may not be able to say for themselves what is happening.

Today all schools are required to have an Anti-Bullying policy. However, school action alone can not guarantee success. It is important that parents and schools work together in partnership to secure support and protection for the child, both in the present and the future. It is essential that parents make contact with their child's school as soon as they become aware of any problem, before those problems escalate.

Parents should also advise their children that if they are being bullied they should **RUN, YELL & TELL**

Racial Harassment: Racial harassment is any hostile or offensive action against an individual or group because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, religion or cultural background. Racial harassment can severely affect a child's ability to learn effectively, and the effect of this harassment can remain with a person throughout their life.

There can be different forms of harassment including:

- Verbal Abuse - name calling, insulting slurs and persistent teasing
- Physical Abuse - hitting, kicking, spitting, taking belongings and threats of violence
- Indirect Abuse - excluding, humiliation, spreading nasty rumours and ridicule.

Practical Steps to take if your child is being bullied or racially harassed:

- Make an appointment with your child's school
- Be specific, give dates, places and names of the children or young people involved.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take and enquire if they have an Anti Bullying Policy / policy against racial harassment incidences.

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Warning Signs:

Running away, non-attendance at school, other learning and behavioural difficulties for no obvious reason. Your child has injuries with no feasible explanation as to how they got them.



Action:

See the head teacher at your child's school for their support and action. If the bullying is occurring outside school, consider contacting the family of the child who is bullying and try to find a way to sort the situation out together.



What to say:

Children: Refuse to put up with bullying. Walk away, tell an adult or a friend and avoid fighting.

Parents: Listen to your child, reassure and be there for them.



Prevention:

Talk to your child about their day at school.

Teach your child to respect others from a young age.

Teach your child that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.

Contacts:

Youth Enquiry Service (YES): 01494 437373 www.youthenquiryservice.org.uk/

Way In: 01494 791177 www.way-in.org.uk/

ChildLine: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape: 020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk

Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk