



**Don't face
it alone**

#SpeakOutAboutBullying

Advice for Parents and Carers

See it. Report it. Show support.

Thousands of young people experience bullying behaviour every day. They often don't speak out about it because they are scared of what might happen or they are unsure about who to tell or how to report it online. We want to change this by showing young people that they deserve to be heard and that help and support are available.

Experiencing bullying behaviour can make young people feel small, lonely and like they have no voice. They may think that even if they did manage to say something, no one would believe them.

If you know or suspect that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour, it can be a very upsetting and emotional time. You may also feel unsure about what to do to support them and how to access help.

The signs of bullying behaviour aren't always obvious. If you're ever unsure, speak up to remind your child that they aren't alone and that you're there to support them.

No-one should face bullying alone.

Understanding Bullying



"Eventually I came out of it the other side without vulnerability or fear of going through it again, because I got help when I spoke up"

Student Anti-Bullying Ambassador

"Bullying behaviour is repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe. This can happen both online and offline."



"We had an open and honest discussion. I wanted my daughter to know that I was there for her."

Parent

Experiencing bullying behaviour is an unpleasant part of too many children's lives, with around a quarter or pupils experiencing some bullying behaviour during their primary school years and one in six 10-15 year olds reporting having experienced it, according to a study by the Department for Education. Online bullying is a serious issue, with one out of five children aged

10-15 years in England and Wales experiencing at least one type of online bullying behaviour according to the Office for National Statistics.

Bullying behaviour can be physical, verbal or indirect. Indirect bullying behaviour can involve the spreading of rumours, deliberately excluding someone or online bullying.

See it. Report it. Show support.

Bullying behaviour can have long term effects on young people, including:

- Mental health problems like depression and anxiety
- Trouble forming friendships
- Lack of acceptance by peers
- Becoming suspicious of other people
- Poorer school performance

(source: NSPCC)

How can you tell if your child is experiencing bullying behaviour?

A young person might be hesitant to tell you about bullying behaviour for a variety of reasons: they may feel embarrassed, upset or angry. They may worry that, by speaking out, they will make the situation worse, so it's important to remind them that you are there for them and will listen to their concerns. Here are some signs to look out for:

- Unwillingness to go to school, perhaps saying they're unwell
- Coming home with damaged or missing belongings
- Seeming anxious or depressed
- Appearing more withdrawn or shy, including self-isolating or withdrawal from activities they previously enjoyed
- Worsening performance or behaviour at school
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Change in friendships
- Hiding their phone, tablet or other devices or checking them more often than usual



SUPPORT NETWORKS

Support networks can be very powerful. Help young people to identify someone they can turn to if they have a problem, worry or concern.

How to support a young person

It can be very upsetting to hear that a young person is experiencing bullying behaviour. Try to remain calm; they may be worried what you will do or say and they don't want you to become angry or upset. It's important to listen, support and ask them how you can help, so that you can work out what to do together.

Listen

Letting a child feel heard is key. The most important thing you can do is listen. Practice 'active listening' where you summarise back what your child has said. So, for example, "so they took your books and threw them all over the floor? And you cried because you felt sad? I can understand why you'd be upset." Try not to respond with advice telling them to not "tell tales", or "be strong, ignore it" and try not to confiscate a device or restrict access if they report online bullying behaviour, these are things young people have said are not helpful and can make the young person feel unsupported or punished for speaking out.

Thank them and work with them

A young person needs to know that they have done the right thing by talking to you about this. They might be worried that by telling you, the problem will get worse. Try not to take over their problem, worry

or concern by taking action without them. Instead work with them to show them you are listening and to help them think about solving and making the situation better together. This will stop some worries in their head about not knowing the next steps. Keep communicating, checking in and updating them on any agreed actions/next steps.

Thank them for being open about it and let them know you'll do your best to help sort things out.

Make a record

Make notes with your child about what has been going on and when. Take screenshots of any online bullying behaviour if possible and encourage your child to report it and block. Finding out about the tools available on the specific platform may help the young person to mute, block, restrict and report the person.

Don't face it alone

#SpeakOutAboutBullying

See it. Report it. Show support.

Take photos of any physical injuries or damage to property.

Keeping a diary of any future incidents will also be useful when addressing the bullying behaviour with the young person's school.

Approaching a Young Person's school

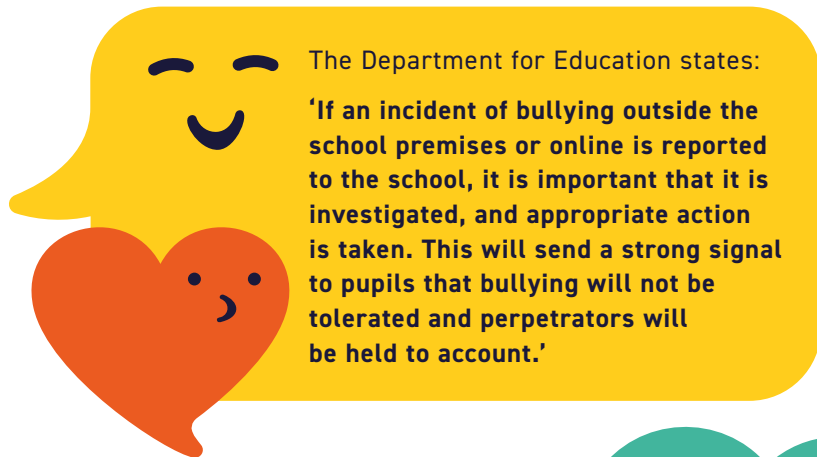
Encourage your child to speak with a teacher or member of staff at school. You could also arrange to go with them to speak with the Headteacher and/or Pastoral Lead.

If you feel you need to speak to the school directly, these are our top tips:

- Schools should have an Anti-Bullying policy so check this out first. It will usually be found on the school's website or student planner and normally outlines the procedure for reporting and dealing with all types of bullying incidents in and outside of school.

- Ask to speak to someone and stress your concern. Don't let your own experience of school get in the way of your child's experience. Be aware that schools are busy places, and it may not be possible to speak or see a member of staff straight away.
- Try not to take your child out of school or keep them off if there is no immediate danger. This can often make it harder to get them back to school and doesn't give the school the chance to sort out the problem.
- Avoid talking to the parents/carers of the person exhibiting bullying behaviour. While you may be tempted to, this isn't always the most helpful plan of action and could make the situation worse.
- If a crime has been committed, report it to the police. If your child is ever in immediate danger, call 999 and see your GP, mental health services and tell the school if you're worried about a young person's wellbeing and mental health.

Schools can, and should, deal with incidents between pupils online or outside of school



For more help and resources visit

DontFaceItAlone.com



Follow us across social media @AntiBullyingPro

#SpeakOutAboutBullying

