

Information for Parents and Families

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying can take the form of name-calling, violence, threatened violence, isolation, ridicule or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone.

The hurtful behaviour may/or may not be deliberate, however the effect on the individual can be the same and the policy will apply in all circumstances.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful
- repeated over a period of time
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against their offenders

Bullying can take many forms, but the four main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings
- verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, threatening, racist remarks
- indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups
- cyber bullying – text / video messaging, chatrooms, instant messaging, email

Our school works hard to ensure that all pupils know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out". Bullying is not when two people have an occasional fight or disagreement.

Every school is likely to have some problems with bullying at one time or another. Our school has an anti-bullying policy which we use to prevent and reduce bullying. Parents and families have an important part to play in helping schools deal with bullying.

What can you do to help?

- Discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.
- Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying. Common symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school. Don't dismiss negative signs. Contact the school immediately if you are worried. Mrs Caroline Hamilton is our anti-bullying champion in school and will keep a recorded log of all reports and incidents.

If your child has been bullied:

- Calmly talk to your child about it
- 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 telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do
- Explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher
- Explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

Talking to teachers about bullying:

- Try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- Stay in touch with the school – let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or another. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully other children because:

- They don't know it is wrong
- They are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family
- They haven't learnt other / better ways of mixing with their friends
- Their friends encourage them to bully
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

To stop your child bullying others:

- Talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop bullying others
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to others

Online Safety

Stories about cyber bullying, online safety, or more specifically online danger, are hard to avoid. The Internet and new communications technology, like all environments and media, can be used and abused. Thankfully the positive aspects far outweigh the negative - however you can take a few simple steps to help make your child's online experience as safe as possible and protect them from cyber bullying.

- Encourage them to tell you if they come across any sites that could cause offence or pose some kind of danger
- If you do catch them on a site that you think is unsuitable, don't assume that they made the choice to go there. It's not that hard for a determined webmaster to "disguise" a web-site to catch innocent visitors.
- If you feel unsure contact school – we will do everything we can to help