



HOUNSLOW SENDIASS

Information Advice and Support Service

Anti-Bullying Factsheet

Summary

Bullying is harmful and intentional behaviour that hurts someone else. It can be distressing and confusing to discover that your child is being bullied. This factsheet is designed to help parents and carers in incidents of bullying take action and ensure the best outcomes for your child.

Every school must have an anti-bullying policy that sets out how it deals with bullying, and this should be made available to parents/carers on the school's website. If your child is being bullied, or is bullying, you should talk to staff at your child's school.

Bullying Definition

The Anti-Bullying Alliance define bullying as:

"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals."

Bullying is often hidden but the emotional distress caused by any form of bullying can affect schoolwork and may also lead to your child behaving differently. Symptoms of distress may include: a change in behaviour, being tearful or oversensitive, withdrawn or having unexplained tummy ache, or feeling ill at the thought of going to school. Children often think that it is their fault that they are bullied. They may believe no one can help.

If your child is being bullied:

Parents/carers play a significant role in supporting schools with issues of bullying. Among the things you can do are:

- If you notice your child acting differently or like something is wrong, speak to your child.
- Keep a record of all events saying what happened, who you or your child reported the event to and what the response was.
- Give your child advice on how to resolve tricky situations calmly.
- Contact the school immediately if you are worried, to discuss your concerns and what support your school can offer.
- If you feel it is appropriate, you may wish to contact the police and/or your local GP.

If you're not satisfied, you could:

- Ask for a copy of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Headteacher in person.
- Put your concerns in writing to the Headteacher and ask for a written response of how they propose to deal with the situation.
- If a response is not received, resend the letter with a copy to the Chair of Governors at the school (Head of Academy Trust if your child's school is an Academy) to explain your concerns & say what you'd like to see happen.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying occurs when your child is being bullied via a mobile phone, social media or on the internet. It is crucial that you know the ways in which your child is using the internet and their mobile phone and to encourage them to be responsible for their activities. The best way to address issues of cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place:

- Most software and services on the internet have built-in safety features such as app blockers.
- Check with your children's internet or mobile-phone provider to find out what protection they can offer and what support is available should bullying continue.
- Keep the computer or mobile device in a family room at home.
- Ask your child's school to put on an information session for parents. The more you know about the online world, the better you can safeguard your children.
- Restrict social media use and consider screen time limits.

If your child is being cyberbullied, keep the evidence, e.g. copies of emails, texts or online conversations and report to:

- School - if the incident involves a pupil, or pupils, at your child's school.
- Service Provider - most service providers have complaints and abuse policies.
- Police - if cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed, i.e. harassment, stalking, threats of harm or violence, evidence of sexual exploitation.

If your child is involved in bullying:

Some children are involved in bullying other children. Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying. Children may also not perceive their actions to be bullying and need support to realise the implications of their actions. Talk to school staff to discuss your concerns and talk to your child to help them resolve the situation. Encourage them to be co-operative or kind to other people.

Useful Contacts

Childline - free helpline for children and young people in the UK

- www.childline.org.uk
- Tel: 0800 1111

Children's Legal Centre (Coram) - free legal advice

- www.childlawadvice.org.uk
- Tel: 0300 330 5485

Family Lives - targeted early intervention and crisis support for families

- <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>
- Helpline: 0808 800 2222
- Live chat function on website

Anti-Bullying Alliance - resources against bullying

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

Contact – for families with disabled children

- <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-start/education-learning/bullying/>

Young Minds – mental health charity for young people

- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/bullying/>