**What is bullying?**

Bullying is when someone or a group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults.

**Bullying isn’t:**

* Single episodes of social rejection or dislike
* Single episode acts of nastiness or spite
* Random acts of aggression or intimidation
* Mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

**Types of bullying**

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s *Building Respectful* and *Safe* Schools (2010) identifies four types of bullying.

**1. Physical bullying** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.

**2. Verbal bullying** includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

**3. Covert bullying** is often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied person’s back. It is designed to harm someone’s social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Covert bullying includes:

* Lying and spreading rumors
* Negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
* Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
* Mimicking unkindly
* Encouraging others to socially exclude someone
* Damaging someone’s social reputation or social acceptance

**4. Cyberbullying** is overt or covert bullying behaviors using digital technologies. Examples include harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyberbullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.



**Signs that your child might be being bullied**

It’s not always easy to tell if a young person is being bullied, as sometimes they don’t want to disclose what’s happening to them.

If you notice a significant change in behavior, this could be cause for concern. Other signs can include changes to mood or eating and sleep patterns; withdrawal from family, social groups or friends; decline in school performance or unwillingness to attend; lost, torn or broken belongings; scratches or bruises, or implausible excuses for any of the above.

**What to do if your child is bullying others**

* Stay calm. Remember, the behavior is at fault, rather than the child.
* Make sure your child knows bullying behavior is inappropriate and why.
* Try to understand the reasons why your child has behaved in this way and look for ways to address problems.
* Encourage your child to look at it from the other’s perspective, for example, “how would you feel if…”
* Help your child think of alternative paths of action.
* Provide appropriate boundaries for their behavior.

**Things you can do if your child is being bullied**

**1. Listen** – Try to listen to the whole story without interrupting. Be empathic, calm and validate what is being said. Ask what your child would like to happen, before you make suggestions.

**2. Talk** – Have a conversation about what happened. Try not to make the conversation intense or you might deter your child from talking to you. Remind your child it’s normal to feel hurt, it’s never OK to be bullied, and it’s NOT their fault.

**3. Find out what is happening** – Note what, when and where the bullying occurred, who was involved, how often and if anybody else witnessed it. Don’t offer to confront the person yourself.

**4. Contact the school** – Contact the school immediately. Provide specifics with regard to what happened, when it happened, and if anyone else was present. Ask to be informed of the solution.

**5. Give sensible advice –**

**Top Tips for Kids**

**If you’re being bullied…**

* Tell the person to stop
* Use neutral language to respond to the bullying, like ‘maybe’ or ‘that’s what you think’
* Walk away
* Try to act unimpressed

**But if it’s been going on for a while and these don’t work…**

* Talk to your friends and ask for support
* Talk to your parents
* Talk to your teacher