

A GUIDE TO

# BULLYING

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Giving  
**disabled children**  
a brighter future



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# What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

## Bullying may take a variety of forms, including the following:

- **Physical bullying:** hitting, slapping or pushing someone
  - **Verbal bullying:** name calling, gossiping or threatening someone
  - **Social bullying:** intimidating, humiliating someone, ignoring or isolating someone
  - **Cyber bullying:** that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.
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# Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place online. Online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.



## Cyber bullying may take a variety of forms, including the following:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
  - Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
  - Trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
  - Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
  - shaming someone online
  - Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
  - Encouraging young people to self-harm
  - Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
  - Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
  - Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
  - Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.
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# **Signs of bullying**

**No single sign will indicate for certain that your child's being bullied, but watch out for:**

- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others.

# **Effects of bullying**

- May develop mental health problems like depression and anxiety
  - Have fewer friendships
  - Aren't accepted by their peers
  - Are wary and suspicious of others
  - Have problems adjusting to school, and don't do as well.
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# Meeting with the school

**Keeping a record of bullying incidents:** Using the record when you meet the school

If you feel or believe that your child is being bullied, then it helps to be as clear as you can about the details before you contact the school. Having a bullying record can help provide evidence to show the school that your child is being bullied and how they are affected. When keeping a log think about questions like when did the bullying happen? and who did the bullying?

For a bullying log template visit: <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-learning/bullying/keeping-a-record-of-bullying-incidents/>

## **Before the meeting**

- Speak to your child and try to find out how they want the school to deal with the bullying and the support they would like in school.
  - You could ask a friend or relative, or contact your local SENDIASS to ask if anyone can come with you.
  - Make sure you have a copy of the school's behaviour policy (and anti-bullying policy if they have one).
  - Make notes or bullet points about what you want to say and what you want to the school to do. This will help you to remain focused during the meeting.
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## During the meeting

- If you have someone with you, ask them to take notes as a record of discussions and any agreed next steps.
- Even if you feel the school should have dealt with things differently, try to focus on making things better now rather than looking back at what the school has or has not done.
- When agreeing a way forward, it's ok to make suggestions to the school about how they can support your child. Let the school know what your child would find helpful.
- Try and work with the school to improve things. Some actions may not happen immediately and you may need more than one meeting to resolve it.
- At the end of the meeting, confirm who will be the main contact at the school and how they will keep you updated. You may want to agree a date for a future meeting to review things.

## **Ways the school can deal with bullying**

Schools deal with bullying in different ways. Depending on the age and needs of the children, some schools will use a combination of approaches. Others may just have policies that focus on individual behaviour.



# **Support**

## **SENDIASS**

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provides free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to special educational needs and disability.

Contact your local SENDIASS to find out more about bullying in schools.

Visit our SENDIASS website: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendiasm>

**Talk to your child about bullying and cyber bullying**

**Let them know who to ask for help**

**Help them relax and take time out**

**Report any online bullying to the website**

**Talk to your child's school or club**