

FACT SHEET: Bullying

The Issue: Bully-proof your kids

Bullying and harassment can happen anywhere to anyone, for any reason. It can occur at school, at work and even at home. The good news is, you can bully-proof your kids by being aware of when and how it can happen and knowing what to do about it.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a form of abuse, and is intentional, repeated intimidating behaviour by an individual or group that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure. In most cases there is a power play within the bullying, with the target been seen as weaker than the perpetrator(s).

The 4 bullying behaviour styles

- Verbal: Name calling, teasing, abuse, humiliation, sarcasm, insults, threats
- Physical: Hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- Social: Ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- Psychological: Spreading rumours, glaring, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email and misuse of camera phones.

Take it seriously

Bullying is a serious issue. It can devalue, isolate and frighten young people. It can have long-term effects on everyone involved and research shows it can lead to low self-esteem, self harm and even suicide.

Signs to Look Out For

Is your child being bullied?

Young people who are being bullied or harassed might not talk about it with their teachers/school counsellors/parents or other adults because they are afraid that it will only make things worse. It's important then to be aware of the danger signs that bullying is happening.

Signs of bullying

- Unexplained cuts, bruises or scratches
- Damaged or ripped clothing
- Damaged or missing belongings
- Vague headaches or stomach aches
- Refusal to go to school
- Tearfulness or depression
- Lack/Loss of confidence and anxiety
- Negative personality changes
- An unwillingness to leave the house
- Aggressive or bullying behaviour towards other family members

What if your child is the bully?

It can be hard to accept that our child is the bully but if this is the case, know that bullies operate out of a place of low self-esteem, inadequacy and feelings of powerlessness and this can often be changed with help and understanding.

6 indicators that a child might use bullying behaviour

They ...

- Are impulsive, hot-headed and dominant
- Can be easily frustrated and have trouble reigning in feelings.
- Show a lack of empathy or compassion
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Show little remorse or refuse to take responsibility for their actions

Tips - What to do if your child is being bullied

- Listen and be supportive – acknowledge their hurt feelings
- Get the facts: Who/What/Where/Why/When – In a caring, interested manner.
- Try to find out your kids perception about why they're being bullied and

explain it's not their fault.

- Teach them to deal with bullying by walking away, making new friends and talking people they trust like friends, teachers, parents and carers about what's happening.
- If the harassment is serious then take the issue to the head of the school, or to the police.

Helping the bully – breaking the cycle of intimidation. If your child is bullying another you can ...

- Help your child understand the damage their actions are causing
- Put healthy boundaries in place and consequences if they are broken
- Consider whether they have learned this behaviour from someone else, such as friends or siblings. Bullies have often been bullied themselves or think it's cool to copy people they admire.
- Talk to the school (or organisation where the bullying is happening) and work out an action plan for dealing with it.

This is taken from http://www.theline.gov.au/pdf/factsheets/factsheet_bullying.pdf