

Bullying

"It happens most days. They call me smelly and fat. They made me give them money again yesterday. They're in the same class and they're always laughing at me. They said if I tell it will be ten times worse. Sometimes I don't go to school... I can't stand it anymore."

- Children have the right not to be hurt
- Bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Bullying can happen to any child at any age
- Act immediately if you think your child is being bullied
- Children need ways to protect themselves and seek help
- Advise your child to run, yell and tell

The real story

Bullying is a frightening experience. It can isolate and damage a young person's self-confidence. Some ongoing bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression and even suicidal thoughts and actions.

School days are a time when the influence of other children is very important and fitting in is seen as essential. If children are thought of as different for any reason, they can be picked on and bullied. Sadly, we still live in a society in which to be different in any way can mean ridicule and bullying (often copied from parents) and this ensures that prejudice will continue into the next generation. It is crucial to be alert to the possibility of bullying and make sure you know the tell-tale signs.

You may think that your child is unlikely to be bullied but the reality is that bullying can happen at any time and to any child.

Bullies who continually harm other children need support and help as well. They may have experienced difficulties of their own at home, which may have led to their actions. Reporting concerns may help them to get help as well.

- Bullying can happen anywhere but most commonly it happens in school
- Bullying can take many forms, from verbal abuse to physical attack
- Bullying is the repeated abuse of a child by one or several people
- Bullies are not always older than the child they harm
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.

If your child tells you about a friend or any other child who is being bullied - listen carefully and take this seriously. That child may not be able to say for themselves what is happening.

Today all schools are required to have an Anti-Bullying Policy. However, school action alone cannot guarantee success and so it is important that parents and schools work together.

WARNING SIGNS

Running away, non-attendance at school, other learning and behavioural difficulties for no obvious reason. Your child has injuries with no feasible explanation for them.

ACTION

See someone at the school for their support and action. If bullying is happening outside school, consider contacting the family of the child who is bullying and try to find a way to work together to sort it out.

WHAT TO SAY

Refuse to put up with bullying. Walk away, tell an adult or friend and avoid fighting. Parents - listen to your child, reassure and be there for them.

PREVENTION

Talk to your child about their school day. Teach your child to respect others from a young age. Teach your child that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.

CONTACTS

- Youthline
01344 311200
- Police
08458 505 505
- Connexions
0845 408 5008
- Education Welfare Service
01344 354045
- Victim Support
01344 411 411
- Childline
0800 1111

*Check the Bracknell ACPC website for the latest phone numbers:
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk*