
Let's Make Bullying Stop

Bullying is when someone keeps doing or saying things to have power over another person.

Some of the ways they bully other people are by: calling them names, saying or writing nasty things about them, leaving them out of activities, not talking to them, threatening them, making them feel uncomfortable or scared, taking or damaging their things, hitting or kicking them, or making them do things they don't want to do.

There are a lot of reasons why some people bully.

They may see it as a way of being popular, or making themselves look tough and in charge.

Some people bully to get attention or things, or to make other people afraid of them. Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying. They may be being bullied themselves.

Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behaviour is and how it makes the person being bullied feel.

No matter what form bullying takes, or why some people bully, it is wrong, and there are ways that you can help make it stop.

If you are being bullied.

Tell a friend what is happening.

Ask him or her to help you. It will be harder for the bully to pick on you if you have a friend with you for support.

Try to ignore the bullying or say 'No' really firmly, then turn and walk away.

Don't worry if people think you are running away. Remember, it is very hard for the bully to go on bullying someone who won't stand still to listen.

Try not to show that you are upset or angry.

Bullies love to get a reaction - it's 'fun'. If you can keep calm and hide your emotions, they might get bored and leave you alone. As one teenager said to us, 'they can't bully you if you don't care'.

Don't fight back if you can help it.

Most bullies are bigger or stronger than you. If you fight back you could make the situation worse, get hurt or be blamed for starting the trouble.

It's not worth getting hurt to keep possessions or money.

If you feel threatened, give the bullies what they want. Property can be replaced, you can't.

Try to think up funny or clever replies in advance.

Make a joke of it. Replies don't have to be wonderfully brilliant or clever but it helps to have an answer ready. Practice saying them in the mirror at home. Using prepared replies works best if the bully is not too threatening and just needs to be put off. The bully might just decide that you are too clever to pick on.

Try to avoid being alone in the places where you know the bully is likely to pick on you.

This might mean changing your route to school, avoiding parts of playground, or only using common rooms or lavatories when other people are there. It's not fair that you have to do this, but it might put the bully off.

Sometimes asking the bully to repeat what they said can put them off.

Often bullies are not brave enough to repeat the remark exactly so they tone it down. If they repeat it, you will have made them do something they hadn't planned on and this gives you some control of the situation.

Keep a diary of what is happening.

Write down what details of the incidents and your feelings. When you do decide to tell someone, a written record of the bullying makes it easier to prove what has been going on.

If you know someone who is being bullied.

Brothers, sisters and friends often know that someone is being bullied long before teachers and parents do. They will often ask others not to tell an adult, but here are some things you can do to help.

- ? Persuade the person being bullied to talk to an adult - this may be a teacher or a parent.
 - ? Encourage the person being bullied to talk to you about what is happening.
 - ? Offer to speak to an adult on the bullied person's behalf.
 - ? Let the bullies know that you are not so frightened of them that you will do nothing and that you are determined to see that they stop.
 - ? Raise the issue of bullying with the student council (if the school has one) or in discussions in subjects like English, drama, religious education, or social education.
 - ? Involve as many people as possible. In particular try to make sure that teachers know what is going on - but, most of all, talk to somebody.
 - ? Do not tell the person being bullied to deal with the problem on their own - if they could they wouldn't have asked you for help.
 - ? Do not try to deal with things on your own
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Things not to do.

No matter who is being bullied, there are some things that you shouldn't do.

- ? Do not use violence against the bullies - you may end up being accused of being a bully yourself.
- ? Do not tell the person being bullied to deal with the problem on their own - if they could they wouldn't have asked you for help.
- ? Do not try to deal with things on your own.
- ? Doing nothing usually means that the bullying carries on, or that the bullies become more confident and choose more victims. Part of the fun that bullies get comes from the reaction of bystanders. If you do nothing the bullies may think that you approve of what they are doing.

Who can I tell?

Usually it's difficult to sort out the bullying on your own or even with the help of friends. You should think seriously about telling an adult. It's the only way to get the bullying stopped.

If you need help, don't be embarrassed about asking. Everyone needs help sometimes and asking for help to stop bullying doesn't mean that you are weak or a failure.

Telling about bullying isn't 'telling tales' or 'dobbing'. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and you should not be silent when you are being tormented and hurt.

Often, people don't tell about bullying because they are afraid the bully will find out and things will get worse. This is a natural fear but schools can put a stop to bullying without the bully learning who told, especially if the bully has several victims.

Even if the bully does find out, it is better to have things out in the open.
