

Supporting Children Through Bullying

A guide for Parents and Carers

01.

Understand Bullying

Bullying isn't just 'kids being kids'. It's repeated, hurtful, intimidated behaviour that can be based on a power imbalance (physical, emotional, social or online).

Bullying can be:

- Physical: pushing, hitting, damaging belongings
- Social: exclusion, rumours, manipulation
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, threats
- Online: messages, posts, impersonation

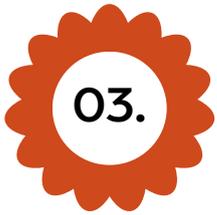
If a child feels scared, targeted or upset, it's a sign they need your support.

Look out for signs

Children might not always share if they are being bullied. Look for:

- Emotional Signs: sudden anxiety about school; mood changes and irritability; low self esteem.
- Physical Signs: unexplained injuries; lost or damaged belongings.
- Behavioural Signs: avoiding certain people or places; declining school performance; disturbed sleep.

02.



Create a safe space

Provide a space for the child to talk about what has been going on. It might be helpful to:

- Stay calm. It's normal to get upset, however a calm reaction will teach the child they are safe to share.
- Validate their feelings. Different children will feel differently about their experiences. It's important to recognise and acknowledge this.
- Provide reassurance. Children may feel like what they are experiencing is their fault. It can be helpful to remind them nobody deserves to be treated unkindly.
- Praise them. Share how brave they have been for telling you about the bullying.
- Ask open questions. This will help the child to talk to you about their feelings and feel listened to.

Teach coping strategies

It might be helpful for the child to have things in place to feel more in control. This can include:

- Confident Body Language;
- Assertive Communication;
- Walking away where possible;
- Identifying a trusted adult at school;
- Breathing exercises;
- Journaling.





Build the child's resilience

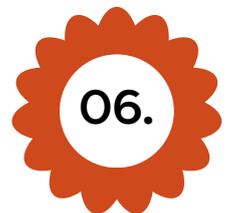
Bullying can be upsetting and affect a child's confidence and self-esteem. It might be helpful to:

- Remind the child of their strengths and achievements;
- Support friendships with kind peers;
- Encourage activities the child enjoys;
- Use positive affirmations and self-talk.

Record and report

Record everything that has happened, dates and times, where it occurred and who was present to collect evidence of the bullying.

Then liaise with the school; request a meeting with a teacher or the pastoral lead, share your records and discuss safety plans and support available for the child.





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Keep a safe space

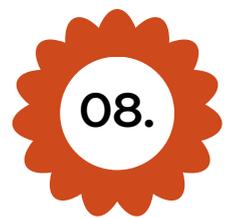
Continue to check-in with the child, asking them about their day, if there was anything about their day that made them feel uncomfortable, or who they spent time with. Showing consistent support and unconditional love can help children heal from bullying.

Know when to look for professional help

This guide is there to support you in supporting a child who is struggling with bullying.

Sometimes, this may not be enough. It doesn't mean you are doing a bad job; they might just need some extra support. Here are some signs that may indicate extra support is needed:

- Persistent anxiety or sadness
- Social withdrawal
- Sleep or eating issues
- Signs of self-harm or talk of hopelessness



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