

Havering SENDIASS Information Sheet



Bullying A Guide for Parents and Carers of a pupil with Special Educational Needs

Your child has the right to be safe. Your child has the right to expect everyone to help keep him or her safe.

Bullying may be defined as the intentional abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent and motivation to cause distress to another individual or group i.e. it is hurtful and deliberate.

Bullying can take many forms

For example

Physical: Taking or spoiling their things, pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats.

Verbal: Persistent name-calling, spreading rumours, teasing.

Emotional: Not letting them join in play or games or social activities. Not talking to them, tormenting, ridiculing and humiliating

Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or unkind sexualised comments

Cyber bullying: harassment, intimidation, threats, exclusion, rejection or images received through social media, computer, mobile phones and instant messaging.

Bullying can also target aspects of the persons

Race: (including religion/culture)

Sexual orientation

Disability

Age

Size

Bullying may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly, but it should always be taken seriously even if it has only occurred on one occasion.

Emotional bullying for example ridiculing and exclusion, seems to be more common than physical violence and it can also be the most difficult type of bullying to cope with or prove.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide

Signs and Symptoms:

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work

- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go "missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen/spoilt)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives unlikely excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Talk to your child about what is happening; be calm, show sensitivity, show concern
- Reassure your child that he / she is not to blame
- If at all possible, act with your child's agreement
- Contact someone at the school
- Expect the school to take you seriously and take appropriate action
- Make sure the school is aware that your child is frightened that the bullying could get worse because you have taken up the issue
- Report any online bullying via the CEOP site

Do

- Do look for signs of distress shown by your child
- Do listen carefully to your child
- Do take your child's concerns seriously
- Do encourage your child to tell you what has been happening. Ease them into conversation about their day as they may find it difficult to talk about it.
- Do report any trouble that has been encountered
- Do help your child to try and find a safe solution
- Look through your child's school/college bullying policy and familiarise yourself with the steps the school should be taking
- Do talk to the school
- Do stay positive when talking to your child about attending school

Don't:

- Don't ignore your child if they say they are worried about being with certain people or in certain places.
- Don't promise to keep the bullying secret.
- Don't blame the child, being bullied is not their fault although they may think it is.
- Don't tell your child: "just put up with it". Bullying is never acceptable. Action needs to be taken to stop bullying.
- Don't tell your child to fight back. The bully may be stronger. Your child may be hurt.
- Don't immediately rush off and deal with the situation yourself.
- Don't emphasise how bad the situation is by interrogating your child on a daily basis, this can make the child more upset and reluctant to talk.

What you should expect the school to do

Each school should have an Anti-Bullying Policy available; ask for a copy.

All schools should recognise and state categorically that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All schools should seek to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

Children, young people and the adults involved with them are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding and to participate in any activity free from intimidation.

Steps to take if the bullying doesn't stop

- Let the school know straight away your concerns i.e. speak to the class teacher, head of year, head teacher or Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)
- Have a meeting with the school to try and resolve the issue which may not happen immediately but keep meeting and working with them
- Keep a record of all the incidents with dates and times and any steps taken by the school and/or yourself to address the issue
- Speak about the issue at your child's annual review
- Go to the GP if the bullying is making your child fearful and stressed
- Check the school is following the bullying policy
- Ask the school for their Complaints Procedure
- Complain to the school if the issue has not been resolved by writing to the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors and keeping a copy of the letter

- Make a formal complaint to the Director of Children's Services at the Local Authority if the issue has still not been resolved and you are still unhappy with how the school and Governors have dealt with it

Sources of advice and further information

Anti-bullying Alliance

Website: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Email: aba@ncb.org.uk

Bullying UK: practical information and advice for young people about bullying

Website: www.bullying.co.uk

Helpline: 0808 800 2222

Email: askus@familylives.org.uk

Bullybusters

Website: www.bullybusters.org.uk

Helpline: 0800 169 6928

CEOP

Child exploitation and online protection

Website: www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre

ChildLine Free and confidential telephone service for children

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Tel: 0800 1111

Kidscape

Website: www.kidscape.org.uk

Tel: 020 7823 5430

Young Minds

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Tel: 0207 089 5050

Young people can also text YM to 8528