

Comberton Primary School

Supporting Anti-bullying Week

Advice for Parents & Carers

How to I spot the signs that my child is being bullied?

You know your child best so will be aware if they seem out of sorts. The type of behaviour that could be an indication of bullying include a reluctance to go to school; unexplained tummy upsets or headaches; showing signs of distress on a Sunday night or at the end of school holidays; becoming either quiet or withdrawn, or playing up; torn clothes and missing belongings; seeming upset after using their phone, tablets, computers etc and wanting to leave for school much earlier than necessary or returning home late. **Bullying can have an impact on a child's mental health so if your child is showing signs of serious distress - such as depression, anxiety and self-harm always see a GP.**

How can I help my child if they are being bullied?

- If your child is being bullied, don't panic. Your key role is listening, calming and providing reassurance that the situation can get better when action is taken.
- Listen and reassure them that coming to you was the right thing to do. Try and establish the facts. It can be helpful to keep a diary of events to share with the school.
- Assure them that the bullying is not their fault and that they have family that will support them. Reassure them that you will not take any action without discussing it with them first.
- Don't encourage retaliation to bullying - such as violent actions. It's important for children to avoid hitting or punching an abusive peer. Reacting that way has negative and unpredictable results- they may be hurt even further, and find that they are labelled as the problem. Rather suggest that they walk away and seek help.
- Find out what your child wants to happen next. Help to identify the choices open to them; the potential next steps to take; and the skills they may have to help solve the problems.
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities that build their confidence and esteem, and help them to form friendships outside of school (or wherever the bullying is taking place).
- Discuss the situation with your child's teacher or Head teacher - or the lead adult wherever the bullying is taking place. Every child has a right to a safe environment in which to learn and play. Schools must have a behaviour policy which sets out the measures that will be taken to prevent all forms of bullying between pupils.



I'm worried about cyber bullying....

- Talk to your child about who they're talking to online and encourage them to think before talking to people they don't know in person.
- Try to understand and guide your child's online behaviour - negotiate and establish boundaries and discuss sensitively the issues around the concept of 'friends'.
- Familiarise yourself with the social networking sites and chat programmes your child uses. Find out more about its build-in safety functions and how they can be contacted within the service.
- Ask your child if they know how to block someone who they don't want to talk to anymore. If they don't, help them learn how to use the blocking feature

- Use parental control software provided by your internet service provider, mobile phone network, online content provider or games console, and consider using filtering options, monitoring and setting time limits for access to chat.
- If you discover misconduct between your child and someone online stay calm, investigate the facts and seek expert help. If someone has acted inappropriately towards your child, or someone they know (such as sexual chat, or asking them to meet up) contact the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#).

Help! My child has been accused of bullying other children

It is very difficult for parents and carers when they find out that their child has been involved in a bullying incident - perhaps even more so if their child is the one accused of bullying behaviour. The important thing to remember is that anyone is capable of bullying behaviour. As parents you have a key role in helping your child to recognise the harm they have caused and encouraging them to change their behaviour in the future. All parents and carers should speak to their children about what bullying is - and how it makes people feel.

They need to feel they can talk to you if there is bullying happening in their class or school. Sometimes children and young people can be pulled into bullying behaviour by friends or the wider peer group - this is particularly true of hurtful comments and images spread through social networking sites.



Some top tips for parents include:

- Make sure your child knows what bullying behaviour is and why it is wrong.
- Make sure your child knows they can talk to you, or to another adult if they are worried about bullying.
- Help your child to realise that no one has the right to pressure them into something they don't want to do - this includes bullying others.
- Make sure they are not bullying others in retaliation for bullying they have suffered - find out if there is a wider culture of bullying in the school or environment where it happened
- Talk to your child about information that is shared through social networking sites - let them know that they shouldn't upload comments or images that could hurt someone else - or pass on content that is designed to hurt someone else. Let them know most social networking sites have report buttons if they have seen bullying behaviour and they want to stop it.
- Make it clear that you do not tolerate the use of disrespectful and hurtful language and behaviour as a family (it's vital that you model this as parents).
- If the school contact you to say your child has been involved in bullying incident stay calm and make sure you gather all the facts relating to the incident. Ask to see evidence if it is available (for example if the alleged bullying is through the internet or phones). Take time to listen to your child's side of the story - but keep an open mind. If the school share information or evidence that shocks you (children can sometimes behave very differently away from their parents) again stay calm, and take time to talk through the incident with your child. Try not to see the behaviour as a permanent reflection of their character - but make clear the behaviour you would like to change. It may be that their current friendship group is having a negative effect on their behaviour - in which case you should talk about what it means to be a friend, and gently encourage them to form more positive relationships.
- Ultimately you are not the first - and you will not be the last parent to have to face this. Don't blame yourself - today is the time for change.