

# Anti-Bullying - Information for Parents

## What is bullying?

Bullying is any deliberate act, which results from a conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It is an abuse of power and results in pain and distress to the victim, who may not have provoked the bullying. The bully thinks they are in control and the victim feels powerless. Usually, the bullying is a campaign over time against a person, but sometimes there can be just one incident.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, social, cyber or psychological and can take many forms. This includes:

- Name calling
- Taunts about sexuality
- Teasing
- Sexist remarks
- Physical violence
- Spreading rumours e.g. social networking sites
- Verbal threats
- Writing hurtful things about someone
- Text messaging
- Demanding money or possessions
- Tormenting or taunting
- Leaving someone out (exclusion)
- Forcing someone to do something they do not want to do.

## How do I know if my child is being bullied?

Signs of possible bullying -

- Appear concerned about walking to school
- Saying they are too unwell to go to school/feel ill
- Begin truanting
- Doing poorly in school work
- Have unexplained scratches or bruises
- Become withdrawn, distressed and anxious

- Become aggressive and unreasonable
- Attempt or threaten suicide
- Begin to bully others
- Can be hypersensitive or unnecessarily emotional (mood swings)
- Nervously watching their phone / facebook page etc

What is important is that you know your own child and if something major has changed in their behaviour, bullying may be the cause (or something else) and you should ask them directly about this.

### **What should I do if my child is being bullied?**

Listen and reassure your child. Try not to over-react, make sure your child knows that things can change, take your child's feelings seriously, agree what both of you will do and try looking at a relevant website with your child.

When something happens which affects your child, you are naturally anxious to have the matter dealt with as quickly as possible. However, it is important that any action taken is well thought out. It is worth remembering that dealing with bullying is a partnership - the school, the parents and students all have a role to play. Be clear about how the school deal with the bullying. In return, the school recognises that you are entitled to information and support in order to play your part in any agreed action.

Find out how frightened your child is and agree with them how best they can feel protected and safe. Children can become very desperate when they are being bullied, so take seriously any threats of running away or suicide. Seek help from school and other agencies who can advise you i.e. tutor/Head of House/ Miss Coleman/ Anti-bullying member.

During your discussion with your child about the bullying, you will have obtained their agreement that you are going to talk to someone at school. Be aware there might be a different version of the same incident and it is important for everyone to be clear about the facts before deciding what action to take. Allow time for the situation to change. Those dealing with it need time to speak to those involved and take the agreed action.

If the bullying or assault, threats or intimidating behaviour occur outside school hours, parents or carers should also call the police.

### **What causes people to bully?**

- They want to be part of a particular group / Peer pressure
- They think it is 'fun'
- They dislike someone or are jealous of them
- It makes them feel they have power or control
- They may have been bullied themselves or are being bullied
- They may be feeling distressed about problems in their lives
- Pushing someone's buttons to seek a reaction
- Home life

### **What can I do if my child is bullying other people?**

- Tell your child you still love them; it is their behaviour you do not like
- Listen to what they say; check that what is happening is bullying
- Talk to them about how the other person might feel
- If the person being bullied is from school, ring and arrange to speak to someone i.e. tutor/Head of House/ Miss Coleman/ Anti-bullying member.
- Think about the reasons why your child might be bullying; talk to them to see if anything is upsetting them
- Think about your child's friends; do any of them bully others?

- Talk about disciplinary actions if they have been bullying and rewards if they behave differently
- Try to develop your child's confidence and self-esteem

### **Helpful Websites and Helplines**

[Passmores Academy Anti-bullying text line](#) (07982 219687)

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk) (Tel: 0808 800 2222)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) (Tel: 0800 1111)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) (Tel: 0808 800 2222)

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk) (Tel: 08451 205 204)

[www.passmoresacademy.com](http://www.passmoresacademy.com)

### **What is happening in school to prevent bullying?**

There is always work going on within school to promote an anti-bullying culture. This includes:

- Assemblies on the theme of anti-bullying and diversity
- Thought for the week
- National Anti-bullying week
- Lessons within Citizenship
- Lessons within Drama
- Lessons within PCC
- Promotion of the Relationship Charter
- Meetings of the Bullying Intervention Focus Group (BIFG)
- Work of the Counselling Services Manager
- Healthy Schools Programme
- Friends Programme
- Well being meetings for staff
- Access to supervised areas at break and lunch.
- Vertical tutor groups and the House system

This list changes regularly as systems improve and develop. If you think there is anything else we could do, do not hesitate to contact the Anti-bullying Group.