

# Parenting Tips



## Bullying Advice

### Signs that a child may be being bullied.

Every parent wants their child to find it easy to talk to them, especially if something is making them scared or miserable. But being bullied can be difficult for young people to talk about. There is often a stigma attached to reporting bullying to any adult - even with a parent they have a really good relationship with. If you're worried that your child might be being bullied, here are some signs to look out for:

### "Physical signs"

Injuries that a child cannot or will not give a convincing explanation for particularly if he/she is often injured and if there seems to be a pattern of when the injuries happen, e.g. after particular activities/classes.

Children who are being bullied often start showing general symptoms of ill health due to stress or complaining of feeling too unwell to go to school. If they are avoiding school and activities even if they are not unwell- they may well have a good reason.

### "Emotional signs "

Becoming aggressive and hostile themselves. Children and young people who are made to feel vulnerable and frustrated by bullying that happens outside the home often react by expressing their frustration in outbursts of anger when they are back in the relative safety of their home.

Constant anxiety/nervousness. Depression and tearfulness.

Lack of confidence and negative self-image.



## "Behavioural signs "

Being generally withdrawn- including withdrawal from physical contact with you and other family members and friends and not wanting to communicate. Changes in eating habits. A lot of bullying is to do with personal appearance, size and shape and young people experiencing bullying are often very dissatisfied with their bodies. Alcohol and/or drug use- this can sometimes be a coping mechanism for young people being bullied or a result of peer pressure. Self-harming. Lashing out and abuse of others

## "General signs "

A child who is being bullied may frequently 'lose' money, possessions, items of clothing and equipment. This may be because somebody is taking them. A child who is being bullied may be tired and sleepy a lot of the time or alternatively, may seem hyperactive with too much energy and unable to concentrate.

You may find that your child is often coming home from school before the end of the day, or you may be called in to see your child's teacher about lateness and truancing that you previously knew nothing about. You may also find that your child changes his/her route to school suddenly. This can be to avoid meeting the people doing the bullying.

If your child shows one or more of these signs, they are not *necessarily* being bullied - but they are generally an indication that something is wrong and can be your cue to try and find out what that might be.

# What to do next?

**If your child is aged 11-17, they can get advice and support from mentors their own age and professional counsellors on [BeatBullying.org](http://BeatBullying.org).**

Bullying can not only be difficult for children to talk about, but also difficult for parents to handle. If your child tells you that they are being bullied, your immediate reaction might be to get angry. But flying off the handle won't help - for some young people bullying brings on feelings of helplessness, guilt and shame, so adding your own anger to the mix could just make things worse.

"We've put together some tips on how to best to talk to your child if they are being bullied:"

### **1. Be open**

Bullying is a difficult subject to broach with your children, but being open, honest and approachable will make it easier for them to discuss their feelings. Tell them that you are worried about them and why you are worried, that you want to help them and that helping them to be safe and happy is the most important thing for you.

### **2. Praise them for opening up**

It's not easy for children to admit out loud that they are being bullied, so praise them for taking that important step. Now they have spoken to you, you can support them in getting the help they need.

### **3. Reassure them**

Despite so many children going through it, there is still a huge stigma associated with bullying, and sometimes youngsters feel as though it's their own fault. Reassure your child that they are not alone – lots of celebs have been bullied, such as BeatBullying ambassadors boxer Joe Calzaghe and JLS star Aston Merrygold.

### **4. Work together**

*It can be tempting, but if you take matters into your own hands and go off and deal with the bullying by yourself, you will make your child look and feel more helpless by taking away their power to make any decisions.* Talking to the bully or their parents may lead people to accuse you of threatening behaviour and give the people doing the bullying more to humiliate your child with. Instead, let your child know that you will not go behind their back or do anything to get help without talking to them about it and having their agreement. It is important that you make this commitment and honour it.

### **5. Get help from others**

Encourage your child to report the problem to the most appropriate teacher at their school.

Let them know that if they are being bullied they have a right to get help to stop it, and that you will help them yourself and support them in getting help from other organisations, such as BeatBullying.

# Anti-Bullying

Like every school, we at Jack Hunt School may have some problems with bullying at one time or another. We therefore have an Anti-Bullying Policy, which we follow in order to reduce and prevent bullying. Full copies of the Policy are available on request but we hope that this information will be helpful to you. **Please remember that bullying cannot be stopped if the school does not know it is happening.**

## If your child has been bullied

- Calmly talk to your child about it.
- Make some notes particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened.
- Reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do.
- Explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's Form Tutor or if they are unavailable the Student Support Officer.

