

Making a Difference in Bullying

What teachers of elementary students need to know



What is Bullying?

Bullying is a relationship problem.

Bullying is repeated and aggressive behaviour by a person that is intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to another individual. This includes psychological harm and/or harm to a person's reputation. Bullying is a behaviour that occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the individuals based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, race or disability.

Tips to share with children who are bullied:

- If it's hard for you to stand up for yourself, ignore the bullying and walk away. Then tell someone who can help.
- Talk to someone who can help, like a parent, teacher or coach.
- If you're scared to talk to an adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you.
- Go to areas where you feel safe.
- Stay close to students you can count on to stick up for you.
- Look confident and tell the child who bullies to back off. Bullying is NOT cool!
- Stay calm. Try not to show you are upset when being bullied.
- Get funny. Humour shows you're not bothered.
- Be assertive, not aggressive. Fighting back often makes the bullying worse.
- Remember that no one deserves to be bullied.

Tips to share with children who watch bullying:

- Talk to someone who can help, like a parent or teacher. Remember that telling is not tattling.
- If you walk away and get help, you are part of the solution. If you stay and watch, you are part of the problem.
- Stand up for children who are bullied. They may not be able to do it themselves.
- Invite kids who are bullied to play with you somewhere else.
- Comfort the person who was hurt and make it known that what happened was not fair or deserved.
- The best thing you can do for kids who are bullied is be their friend.
- If it is hard for you to speak out against bullying on your own, ask a friend to do it with you.
- Help kids who bully, don't hurt them. Speaking out helps, bullying back doesn't help.

Tips to share with children who bully:

- Talk to someone who can help, like a parent, teacher or coach. They can help you find ways to get along with others.
- Ask a friend to help you stop if you start to bully.
- Set goals each day to make it easier not to bully (e.g. keep cool; today I'll help others rather than hurt them).
- Understand that you may not like everyone but you do have to treat them with respect.
- Appreciate kid's differences. Different doesn't mean worse or better than you.
- Put yourself in other kid's shoes. Would you want to be picked on, put down, or left out?
- Apologize to the kids you have bullied.
- Know that if other children watch and laugh, it doesn't mean they like it when you bully.
- Be a leader. Real leaders treat others with respect.

How do teachers know if a student is involved in bullying?

Bullying is a covert behaviour and is usually hidden from adults. Look for the following clues:

Signs of being bullied

- Afraid to go to school or other activities
- Appears anxious or fearful
- Low self-esteem and makes negative comments
- Complains of feeling unwell
- Lower interest in activities and performance
- Loses things, needs money, reports being hungry
- Injuries, bruising, damaged clothing or articles
- Appears unhappy, irritable
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares
- Threats to hurt themselves or others
- Appears isolated from his/her peer group

Signs of bullying others

- Aggressive with parents, siblings, pets and friends
- Low concern for others' feelings
- Bossy and manipulative behaviour
- Unexplained objects or money
- Secretive about possessions and activities
- Holds a positive view of aggression
- Easily frustrated and quick to anger
- Does not recognize impact of his/her behaviour
- Has friends who bully and are aggressive
- Child has trouble standing up to peer pressure

