



Fast Facts: Bullying in Schools

Why don't simple solutions work to reduce bullying in the long-term?

Bullying is complex. Approaches to bullying need to include relationship and social solutions at the whole-school, class and student level, and on occasion, at the family and community level. Although bullying may stop in the short-term after a 'get tough on bullying' approach, unless the relationship and social factors are addressed, it is very likely to reoccur, take another form, or just become hidden (or covert).

What can parents do if bullying happens?

What can parents do if their child tells them they are being bullied?

There are five key steps for parents if their child tells them they have been bullied:

1. **listen** carefully to what your child wants to say
2. **reassure** your child that they are not to blame and ask open and empathetic questions to find out more details
3. **ask** your child what they want to do and what they want you to do
4. **discuss** with your child some sensible strategies to handle the bullying – starting a fight is not sensible
5. **contact** the school

What strategies can parents suggest to their child who is being physically bullied?

The Bullying. No Way! website provides information about various strategies. These can be tried to avoid physical bullying situations:

1. **avoid areas** which allow the bullying students to avoid detection by teachers
2. stay with **other students**
3. **talk** to a trusted adult at school or home

What strategies can parents suggest to their child who is being verbally or socially bullied?

The Bullying. No Way! website provides information about various strategies. These can be tried if the child feels safe:

1. **walk away**
2. try to **act unaffected** or unimpressed
3. try to **deflect** the bullying behaviour (e.g. pretending to agree in an offhand way 'okay, yeah, maybe')
4. **say 'No!'** or 'Stop it!' firmly
5. **talk** to a trusted adult at the school or at home

What should parents avoid telling their children to do?

Strategies not recommended for dealing with bullying include:

- fighting back
- bullying the person who has bullied them
- remaining silent about the problem.

What can parents do if they are told or suspect that their child is bullying others?

The Bullying. No Way! website provides information about things to do. If a parent suspects their child has been bullying others, they can talk to their child about:

- why they have been behaving this way
- taking responsibility for their behaviour



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- how to sort out differences and resolve conflicts
- how to treat others with respect
- the effect of bullying behaviour on others
- the need to repair harm they have caused to others
- the need to restore relationships.

Parents may also like to talk to their child's school to come up with a plan to help their child learn more appropriate ways to behave.

What can parents expect from their child's school

Most schools have a written policy about how they manage student behaviour, including bullying. Schools will consider your child's circumstances and will develop the most appropriate strategies for them. These strategies could include:

- teaching and learning programs to develop students' communication, social, assertiveness and coping skills
- changes to the school environment such as redesigning the playground
- increasing teachers' supervision of students at particular times or places
- support from a school counsellor, psychologist or guidance officer
- mediation for the students involved with a trained teacher to resolve their problem
- changes to technology access at school
- timetable or class changes (that may be temporary or permanent) to decrease the contact the students have with each other
- disciplinary action for students who continue to bully others despite the efforts of the school to promote appropriate behaviour.

The school may develop an action plan for your child and any other children involved. Strategies you could use at home may also be included in this plan.

What can students do if bullying happens?

What can I do if I am being bullied in person?

If you are being bullied, and you feel safe to do so:

- **say 'No!'** or 'Stop it!' firmly
- **walk away**
- try to **act unaffected** or ignore the person
- **talk** to a trusted adult at the school or at home
- **ask friends, parents or teachers for their help** to deal with the issue safely.

Having the courage to talk to someone is important if you are being bullied. Sometimes, just telling the bully to stop can be effective. If that doesn't work ask friends, parents or teachers for their help to deal with the issue safely.



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What can I do if I am being cyberbullied?

If you are being cyberbullied, and you feel safe to do so:

- **don't respond** to the message or image
- **save the evidence** as a screenshot if you wish to use it as part of dealing with the bullying
- **block** the sender and delete the message
- **report** the situation to the website or Internet Service Provider
- **talk** to trusted people—friends, adults, teachers, parents and police if necessary.

What can I do if I see someone else being bullied?

The Bullying. No Way! website provides information about things to do. If you see someone else being bullied, and feel safe to do so, you can:

- refuse to join in
- not watch
- tell the person doing the bullying to stop
- tell the person doing the bullying that you will talk to a teacher
- say something supportive to the person who is being bullied or invite them to join your group
- say to the person being bullied that the other person's behaviour is not okay.

Who to talk to

Who can parents or students talk to for help?

To talk to someone go to:

Kids' Helpline 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelp.com.au
Parents' Helplines (each state has a helpline)

To report cyberbullying go to:

Cybersafety help www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx

To report bullying that may constitute a crime go to:

Australian Federal Police www.afp.gov.au

For more information and support go to:

Reach Out www.reachout.com.au
Beyondblue www.beyondblue.org.au
Headspace www.headspace.org.au
Australian Psychological Society www.psychology.org.au
Australian Guidance and Counselling Association www.agca.com.au

For more information related to bullying go to:

Bullying. No Way! www.bullyingnoway.gov.au