



GENERAL GUIDELINES

Ask for the school anti-bullying policy and reporting system and talk to your child about it so they can refer to them. It may be helpful to create an action plan with your child of the steps you are going to take to address the bullying and improve the situation.

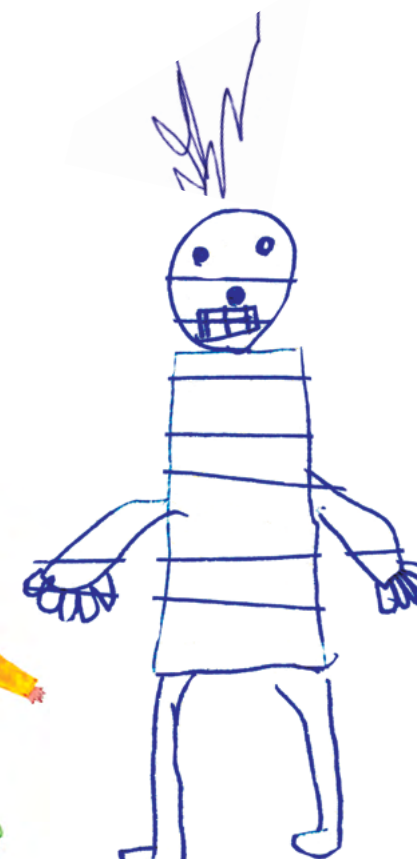
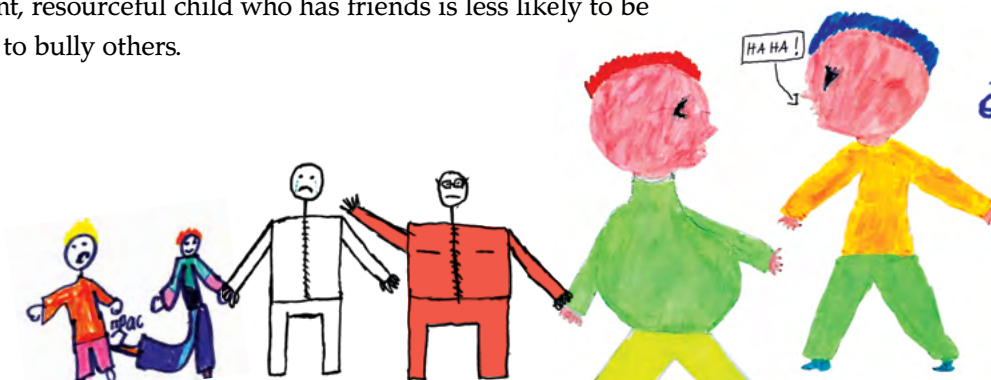
Tell your child about the child you used to be and how you used to handle difficult situations.

Teach children ways to resolve arguments without violent words or actions. Teach children self-protection skills: how to walk confidently, stay alert to what is going on around them, and stand up for themselves verbally. Teach them to look for friends for support.

Listen! Encourage your child to talk about school, social events, walking and riding to and from school. Pay attention to their conversations with other children. This could be your first clue to whether your child is a victim, a bully, or neither. Stay close and be sensitive.

Ask your child what they think would be the best solution in case of bullying. Children may fear that by reporting bullying it may become worse. They need you to listen, give reassurance and explain that together you will resolve the situation.

Help children learn the social skills they need to make friends. A confident, resourceful child who has friends is less likely to be bullied or to bully others.



Keep on communicating! Make sure that all parties involved know what action you intend to take and when. Check in regularly that the bullying behaviour has stopped as bullying is usually repetitive by nature.

Consult an expert.

Find out helpful contacts to refer to in case of bullying or violence.

Here's a couple to start with:

- **116 111** National Helpline for Children
- **0800 1111** Childline
- **0207 628 7499** Anti-bullying Alliance

REMEMBER

Schools have a responsibility to teach your children knowledge and to make them feel safe, taken seriously and respected as persons. It is your responsibility to raise a healthy and happy child and a good person too!



Illustrations: girls and boys from Bulgaria, Germany, The Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

PROJECT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

Animus Association Foundation, Bulgaria www.animusassociation.org
Barnardo's, United Kingdom www.barnardos.org.uk
Göteborg Stad, Sweden <http://goteborg.se/wps/portal/enheter/grundskola/nygardsskolan>
International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI), The Netherlands www.icdi.nl
Linka Detskej Istoty (LDI), Slovakia www.ldi.sk
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SPI Forschung, Germany www.spi-research.eu



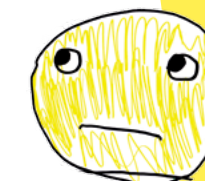
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IS MY CHILD INVOLVED IN BULLYING?

Children tend not to tell us about bullying in school: they live their own lives, which they want to manage themselves. This is why we should teach children how to react and deal with bullying.



BULLYING

is often dismissed as a natural process of growing up. Usually bullying behaviour remains invisible over long periods of time and may seem rather insignificant compared to aggressive acts of physical harm and abuse. However, statistics show that one in four children who bully ends up with a criminal record before the age of 20. At the same time children who have been victims of school bullying develop depressive symptoms, high anxiety and easily become victims later in life. Hence, it is even more important to be alert to this early form of aggressive, violent behaviour.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

A child who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:

- being afraid to go to school
- feeling sick in the morning
- showing up with unexplained cuts, bruises or other injuries
- taking a different route to school
- going to school early or late
- having problems with school assignments, drop in grades
- playing truant
- exhibiting low tolerance to frustration
- experiencing nightmares and disturbed sleep
- coming home with damaged belongings
- exhibiting changes in mood or behaviour e.g. being quiet, sullen, withdrawn, or argumentative, changes in habits or in the use of internet and social networks
- losing belongings
- asking for extra money or supplies
- fidgeting when asked what is going on at school

HOW TO APPROACH A CHILD IF WE SUSPECT THAT SHE OR HE IS BEING BULLIED?

Take your child's complaints of bullying seriously.

Children are often afraid or ashamed to tell anyone that they are being bullied, so believe your child's complaints.

Do not ever think that children will manage on their own. They need help from someone close who will understand and support them.

Provide opportunities for your child to talk about bullying. This often works well in informal moments during the day. When watching TV together, reading, playing a game, or going to the park.

Watch for symptoms that your child may be a bully victim.

Notify the school immediately if you think your child is being bullied. Alerted caregivers can carefully monitor your child's actions and take other steps to ensure your child's safety. Teachers, school psychologists and counsellors are available to help you and your child or assist you by referring you to available social services.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I SUSPECT THAT MY CHILD IS BULLYING OTHERS?

Do not think, "My child could not be a bully!" Take the problem seriously.

Talk to your child. Keep in mind that a child who is bullying will often try to hide the negative and aggressive feelings and behaviour and put the blame on others.

Do not think your kid is "bad". Through their behavior children indicate that something is going on and there is a problem.

Teach your child **what is good, what is bad, and what hurts others.**

Make sure you reflect on your own behaviour as parents. Make certain your child does not witness violent behaviour between family members.

Tell your child that you will not tolerate this kind of behaviour. Discuss with your child the negative impact that bullying has on the victims.

Talk to their teacher and/or Head teacher. Frequent communication with teachers is important to find out how your child behaves at school.

Increase supervision on your child's activities and whereabouts. Find out who their friends are and make sure you know where they are at all times. Discourage relationships with aggressive peers. Talk about your child's motives to behave aggressively.

Establish clear family regulations and stick to them. When kids come up with the rules, it is easier to respect them. When children follow the rules, be quick to show approval.

Do not punish your child with humiliation just to make them experience what it feels like to be bullied. Instead, **consider an effective and non-violent response.** This should be in proportion with the severity of your child's actions and his or her age and development stage. Corporal punishment carries the message that *might is right*.

Support your child in learning how to process and release their aggressive feelings, impulses and behaviour appropriately without hurting anyone.

Spend more time with your child. Look for activities you can do together such as sports or hobbies.

Praise your child's kindness toward others. Let your child know that kindness is valued. Inspire your child's good conduct for good conducts sake and to do what is good and right. Do not encourage proper behaviour by treats (gifts, chocolates, computer games, watching TV or other *bribes*) or bad behaviour by sanctions (rejection, punishment, slapping) to avoid teaching children to behave well only in exchange for approval, attention, gifts or to escape sanctions.