



# A Parent/Carers Guide to Anti-Bullying.



If your child has previously experienced or is currently experiencing bullying behaviour, it can be a very upsetting and emotional time. You may also feel quite isolated and anxious about what to do to support your child and resolve the situation. In this guide, we will explore bullying behaviour and definitions, some of the most common signs to look out for if you know or suspect that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour and practical next steps towards a solution.

## THE DIANA AWARD'S DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR\_

Repeated negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe. This can happen both online and offline.

## TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR



**Verbal** bullying behaviour is the repeated, negative use of speech, sign language or verbal gestures to intentionally hurt others e.g. using hurtful words, discriminatory or offensive language or swear words.



**Indirect** bullying behaviour is the repeated, negative use of actions which are neither physical nor verbal to intentionally hurt others e.g. spreading rumours, purposefully excluding another person, damaging or stealing someone's property or cyberbullying.



**Physical** bullying behaviour is the repeated, negative use of body contact to intentionally hurt others e.g. kicking, punching, slapping, inappropriate touching or spitting.

## Signs and Symptoms to look out for if you believe your child is experiencing bullying behaviour.

- Isolation from social groups or gatherings.
- Changes in personality (quieter or acting out for attention)
- Fall in school grades
- Defensive body language
- Stopped doing activities they enjoy.
- Regularly truant from school
- Does not want to go to school
- Being upset before or after school
- Being secretive and hiding their phone or other devices.

## How to help your child if they are experiencing bullying behaviour

It can be hard as a parent/guardian to find out your child is experiencing bullying behaviour. If your child tells you that this is happening, listen to them carefully, praise them for confiding in you and remain calm.

### STEP ONE

#### Speaking to your child\_

- Unhelpful responses include: 'just ignore it', 'man up', 'stop telling tales' or 'it is just a normal part of growing up'. Instead, try helpful responses like 'Thank you for telling me', 'We will get through this together' or 'I will support you through this'.
- Focus on acknowledging how they feel rather than dismissing it. Young people have the right to feel safe and happy at school and bullying behaviour should never be a barrier to learning. Try to remain calm and positive.

### STEP TWO

#### Get all the facts\_

- Use active listening, approach conversations with no expectations/hidden agenda and don't ask leading questions. Instead, encourage your child to tell you what has been happening in their own words. Avoid blaming language such as 'I told you not to wear that to school'; remember that experiencing bullying behaviour is never the young person's fault.

### STEP THREE

#### Work with others who can help you\_

- Work with the school: There are a lot of school staff who can support your child to take positive next steps. This sometimes includes the school's pastoral lead or SENCo (Special Education Needs Coordinator). All schools are legally required to have an Anti-Bullying Policy and a procedure to follow when bullying incidents takes place. Check the school website or ask to see a copy of these documents so you can work with the school to resolve this together.
- Other parents: You may be tempted to speak to other parents or even post something on social media. This can be detrimental, as it could exacerbate the situation.

## How to help your child if they are experiencing online bullying behaviour

In addition to the above:

- Encourage your child to talk to you about what has happened. They may also have a teacher who they trust and can go to for support in school too.
- Report the post/video or photos on the app/online platform. All online apps/platforms have online Help Centres where they outline the steps to report content. In most situations, reporting content is anonymous, so the person who posted the content will not know who reported it.
- Block the person posting the content. This will stop them being able to message your child.
- Save the evidence by screenshotting.
- Encourage your child to not reply or answer back, however tempting it may be.
- Stay positive.
- If your child is ever in immediate danger, ring 999