

# Bullying - advice for parents

## What is bullying?

Bullying is persistent verbal or physical aggression that a person feels is physically or emotionally intimidating. Bullying can happen anywhere. It can mean being attacked, mocked, humiliated, threatened, made to feel worthless or hurt in other ways. It can be face to face, by rumour, text or the internet. It is unacceptable and needs to be dealt with quickly. Parents including carers want their children to be safe, confident, happy and caring members of the community. If you think your child is being bullied, act immediately. Children who bully also need help from their parents and other organisations to understand why they bully others, and to change their behaviour. Some children become bullies because they have been bullied themselves.

## What are the signs that someone may be bullying my child?

- Not wanting to go to school or leave the house on their own.
- Coming home with cuts, bruises or torn clothes.
- Possessions or dinner money being regularly 'lost'.
- Falling out with friends.
- Aggressive behaviour towards brothers and sisters.
- Not doing well at school.
- Low self-esteem and confidence.

## What can I do if I think my child is being bullied?

Talk to your child

- Gently encourage your child to talk, even if they become upset.
- Stay calm and listen – this will reassure your child.
- Focus on facts – what, where, who and how often.

Ask how they felt.

- Show you take it seriously.
- Make clear it is not their fault.
- Tell your child you want to help, but be guided by them in deciding what to do.

If they won't talk with you, suggest they speak to someone else in confidence, such as Childline.

- Discuss who you should share this information with.