

WHAT IS BULLYING AND WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

The national definition states **bullying**:

- involves a **misuse of power** in a relationship,
- is **ongoing** and **repeated**, and
- involves behaviours that can **cause harm** (physical, social or psychological).

Behaviours that are **not** bullying include:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there are **no** power imbalances)
- not liking someone or a **single act** of social rejection
- **one-off** acts of meanness or spite
- **isolated incidents** of aggression, intimidation, or violence.

These other behaviours may be just as serious but may require different responses.

Bullying is more than just being mean or not letting someone play with you.

Types of bullying:

Verbal



Name calling, teasing, putting someone down, threatening to cause harm.

Physical



Hitting, punching, kicking, spitting, tripping, breaking someone's things, pulling faces or making rude hand signals.

Social



Spreading rumours, leaving someone out on purpose, embarrassing someone in front of others.

Cyberbullying



Using technology to hurt someone by sending hurtful messages, pictures or comments. A single incident is considered bullying, as it can be shared multiple times.

Remember, it is only considered bullying when there is a **power in balance**, the behaviour is **repeated**, and the behaviours **cause harm**.

WHY DO STUDENTS USE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

Bullying is not a personality trait, it is a behaviour that students may use when they:

- Want others to like them
- feel jealous
- want to fit in with their friends
- feel angry
- have been bullied themselves
- don't know what they are doing is wrong
- want a tangible item that someone else has.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN BULLIED?

REPOUND IN A CONSTRUCTIVE, SUPPORTIVE AND TIMELY MANNER

- Use **active listening** and **reassure** your child that you are there for them.
- **Avoid minimising** the issue or saying dismissive things.
- **Find a suitable place** to talk or make a time to discuss the problem privately.
- Use a **calm voice** and open **body language**.
- **Listen** without interrupting, using only encouraging questions or sounds to show you are listening.
- When you have heard the whole story, **ask questions** if you need more details
- Ask the student **when, how** and **where** the bullying happens, including:
 - What **words** have been said or written.
 - Has anyone been **physically hurt** and how.
 - **Who** is usually around.
 - Who else have they **talked to** about this.
 - If it is happening online, ask if there is any **evidence**
- Ask questions to help you distinguish between single incidents of conflict and an **ongoing pattern** of bullying.
- **Write** down the information or get your child to write about it (if they can).
- **Reassure** the student it's never okay to be bullied.
- **Reassure** the student it is not their fault.
- **Praise** the student for speaking out, acknowledging that talking about it takes lots of courage.

HELP YOUR CHILD FIND A SOLUTION

- Ask what **they** want to do.
- Ask what they want **you** to do (This will help them feel they have some control).
- Ask the student if they **feel safe** in the short term.
- If the bullying has happened online, encourage your child to leave the chat or group, change their privacy settings and block and report the incident (If the platform does not respond, it can also be reported to the eSafety commissioner).

WORKING TOGETHER WITH SCHOOL STAFF

The best way to stop bullying from happening again, is for parents and the school to work together.

- Contact your child's teacher
- be as clear as possible about what happened
- ask what steps will be taken
- recognise that investigating the situation may take time
- if you are not satisfied with the solution or the bullying behaviour continues, contact the deputy principal or principal.

WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD DO IN THE MOMENT

Tell the other student to **stop**.

Walk away from the student using the bullying behaviour.

Talk to a teacher, a trusted adult and/or friends.