
Bullying: Tips for Parents

Bullying can have a significant impact on a child's mental health. It can take the form of physical violence, humiliation, verbal abuse, or social exclusion, and can happen at school, at home, or online. Here are ten tips from experts and parents for supporting a child who is being bullied.

Tip 1 — Know the signs

Common warning signs that a child may be being bullied include:

- School avoidance or anxiety.
- Belongings going missing or coming home damaged.
- An unexpected change in how they are doing at school.
- Unexplained physical injuries.
- Difficulty getting to sleep.
- Unusual outbursts of anger or upset with no obvious trigger.

Tip 2 — Talk about feelings

Children are more likely to come forward if your family regularly talks about difficult feelings and experiences. Normalising these conversations makes it easier for a child to tell you if something is wrong.

Tip 3 — Choose your moment

If you suspect your child is being bullied but they won't open up, wait for the right moment rather than forcing the conversation. Let them know you are available whenever they are ready. If they won't talk to you, ask whether there is someone else they would feel comfortable talking to instead.

Tip 4 — Listen first

Hearing that your child is being bullied is hard, and it may take real self-control not to act immediately. They may also feel embarrassed. Give them the space to work through their thoughts and experiences before offering advice or solutions.

Tip 5 — Validate their feelings

Acknowledge what your child is experiencing and resist the urge to minimise it. Your reaction matters enormously. When they know you take their concerns seriously, you have a much better chance of working together to address the situation.

Tip 6 — Report hate crime to the police

Bullying someone because of their gender identity, sexuality, religious beliefs, race, or disability is a hate crime and is against the law. This can be reported to the police online.

Tip 7 — Talk to the school

All schools have a responsibility to protect their pupils from bullying, whether it happens at school, online, or elsewhere. Involve your child in deciding what information to share, and bring evidence if you have it so the school can take action.

Tip 8 — Help your child to connect

Friendships are important for children's mental health and wellbeing. Create opportunities for your child to spend time with friends, including children from outside their school — this can help boost confidence and self-esteem independently of the bullying situation.

Tip 9 — Monitor social media

If your child is being bullied online, help them understand how to block and report abusive content. You may also choose to monitor or restrict what they are viewing, and let them know you are doing this.

Tip 10 — Make sure home is a safe space

Bullying can take a heavy toll on a child's wellbeing. It matters that they feel loved and accepted at home. Make time for fun together — moments of lightness and laughter can be genuinely restorative.