



Nip in
the Bud

Tips for Parents - Bullying

Bullying can have a big impact on a child's mental health, and might be in the form of physical violence, humiliation, verbal abuse, or leaving someone out of a group. Bullying can happen to any child at school, at home, or online.

Here are some tips from experts and parents for how to support a child who is being bullied.

Tip 1 – Know the signs

Here are a few of the common warning signs that a child is being bullied:

- School avoidance or anxiety
- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- An unexpected change in how they are doing in school
- Unexplained physical injuries
- Difficulty getting to sleep
- Unusual outbursts of anger or upset without any obvious trigger

Tip 2 – Talk about feelings

Children may feel more confident bringing their worries to you if your family regularly talk about difficult feelings and experiences. This makes it more likely that a child will come forward and tell you if they are being bullied.

Tip 3 – Choose your moment

If you suspect your child is being bullied but they won't open up to you, try to choose the right moment to start the conversation. Let them know you are here whenever they are ready to talk and build trust by giving them time and space. If they won't talk to you, ask them if there is someone else they would talk to instead.

Tip 4 – Listen first

Hearing that your child is being bullied is incredibly hard and it might take all your self-control not to jump or act quickly to protect them. They might also feel embarrassed, so try to give them an opportunity to figure out their thoughts and experiences before giving them advice.

Tip 5 – Validate their feelings

It's important to validate what your child is experiencing and not to minimise this. Your reaction can have a big impact. When your child knows you've got their back and that you take their concerns seriously, you have a 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 because they have a disability is a hate crime and is against the law. You can report crimes like this to the police online.

Tip 7 – Talk to the school

Whether bullying is happening at school, online, or elsewhere, all schools have a responsibility to protect their students from bullying. Make sure you include your child when deciding what information you should share and, if possible, bring evidence of bullying to their school so they can address this.

Tip 8 – Help your child to connect

Friendships are important for children's mental health and wellbeing, and it's important to create opportunities for your child to spend time with friends. Spending time with children from different schools can also help boost their confidence and self-esteem.

Tip 9 – Monitor social media

If your child is being bullied online it's important to educate them about how to block and report abusive content. You may also decide to monitor or restrict what they are viewing online, and to let your child know you are doing this.

Tip 10 – Make sure home is a safe space

Bullying can have a huge impact on children's wellbeing, and it's important that children feel loved and accepted at home. Try to spend some quality time together where you can have fun and remember what it's like to laugh and smile.