

BULLYING

Information for secondary school pupils

www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

What is bullying?

Bullying is when people deliberately hurt, harass or intimidate someone else. Every year, more than 20,000 young people call ChildLine about bullying, making it the most common problem we're phoned about. These are some of the ways young people describe bullying:

- being called names
- being teased
- being punched, pushed or attacked
- being forced to hand over money, mobiles or other possessions
- getting abusive or threatening text messages or emails
- having rumours spread about them
- being ignored or left out
- being attacked because of their religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, ethnicity or race.

If you are being bullied

'A girl at school was constantly calling me names. I didn't know what to do, so I called ChildLine. They encouraged me to find an adult I could trust and to tell her how I felt. Talking about it made me feel a lot better, and the teacher I talked to sorted the other girl out.'
Charlotte, 16

- You shouldn't feel ashamed about being bullied. It's not your fault – but it is important that you get help. No one deserves to be bullied.
- Is there someone who you would feel comfortable talking to about what's going on? Maybe a friend, someone at your school, someone you live with or just someone you trust.
- When you've decided who to talk to, tell them what's happening and how it's making you feel. They might be able to tell you what you can do

about it, or can help you decide what you want to do next.

- If you're being bullied at school, ask someone (such as a teacher) to tell you about the school's guidelines on bullying. Most schools have a written policy on bullying, and this may give you an idea of what you can do and what your school should do.
- If you can't think of someone to talk to, you could call ChildLine on **0800 1111** to speak to an adult who is there to listen and help you think about what you can do.
- If you talk to someone about what's happening and it doesn't help, don't give up. Sometimes you may need to talk to more than one person. You have the right to be helped, and don't have to put up with being bullied. Always remember that it is not your fault.
- Trying to remember things accurately can sometimes be difficult, so keep a record of what happens to you. Writing it down is often a good way of being sure about what, when and where things happened.
- It's important to feel safe. Are there ways for you to keep yourself out of harm's way? For instance, you could walk home with friends rather than on your own, or ask someone to stay with you if you feel threatened.



To order more copies of this information sheet or for general enquiries please call 020 7650 3200

ChildLine is a registered charity, no. 1003758

Please note – all names and identifying details have been changed to protect young people's identities.

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If you witness bullying

'I saw a small boy being bullied by a gang in the park. They swore at him and kicked him. I was too scared to do anything in case they turned on me.'
Duncan, 13

- Don't ignore what happens.
- Let the person who's being bullied know you've seen what's going on and are concerned.
- Encourage them to tell someone.
- If it is in school and you are worried about it, you may need to report the incident. Try to find out who to report bullying to. If you are worried about putting yourself at risk, can you tell someone about the bullying in confidence? Write them a note about what you saw.
- Teachers are often the last to know that bullying is going on. If they are going to be able to do anything about it, they need to know it's happening.
- If there is a problem with bullying in your school you may want to encourage others to get involved in anti-bullying schemes such as poster campaigns or support groups run by pupils. Maybe you could put on a drama presentation to raise awareness in your school.
- Are you aware of your school's anti-bullying policy? Can you think of ways to make it more effective? You may be able to talk to your school council or members of staff.
- If you are concerned about someone who is being bullied or want some more information you can call ChildLine on **0800 1111**.

If you are bullying someone

'It got to be a habit. The awful thing was that I felt good seeing him cry. The others laughed and that made me feel even better. But then the teacher said that he was in the hospital because he

had tried to hurt himself to get away from the bullying. It was only a bit of fun really – I didn't mean him to take it seriously.' Jay, 15

- You do have a choice – just because you've bullied others in the past doesn't mean you have to keep doing it!
- People who are bullied can feel upset and scared. You can put a stop to that by changing your behaviour.
- You can get into a lot of trouble if you keep bullying others – you might get suspended or excluded from school or, in extreme cases, the police might get involved.
- Sometimes things happen to you that make you more likely to bully others – being bullied yourself, for instance, or having problems at home. It's important to get help for yourself, rather than taking your frustrations out on others.

Calls to ChildLine are free. You can either call the helpline on **0800 1111** or write to ChildLine, Freepost NATN1111, London E1 6BR. If you live in Scotland, you can also call ChildLine Scotland's bullying line, Monday–Friday 3.30pm–9.30pm on **0800 44 11 11**.

Children who are deaf or find using a regular phone difficult can try our textphone service on **0800 400 222**.

It can sometimes be difficult to get through to ChildLine when a lot of children are trying to call us, but do keep trying and you will get through to someone who can help.

To read more about bullying, visit the ChildLine website at **www.childline.org.uk**

To see how peer support schemes can help your school tackle bullying, visit **www.childline.org.uk/schools.asp**

