



## **Bully Free Cheshire East: advice for parents or guardians**

### **Is it bullying or just a fall out?**

**There are three agreed defining features of bullying:**

- the victim is targeted by an individual or group on a regular basis
- there is intention to harm or humiliate
- there is a power imbalance, the victim is fearful of those targeting him or her

When all of the above are happening, it is highly likely that this is a bullying situation.

If the situation is a fallout between friends, but you remain concerned, please discuss with an adult working with your child and ask them to monitor things.

### **What to do if my child is being bullied**

1. Stay calm and reassure your child that you will do everything you can to stop the bullying
2. Make contact with the school or place where the bullying is happening immediately. Notify them of what is happening and ask them to put a support plan in place to support your child whilst the issue is being dealt with
3. Consider speaking with your GP if you feel your child's physical or emotional health is being affected by what is going on

### **Don't:**

- **DON'T** confront other parents or the child / young person about the behaviour. When emotions are running high, things can quickly get out of hand!
- **DON'T** take to social media to vent your anger! Making comments which could cause harm or distress to another individual is a criminal offence Under the Malicious Communications Act and you could be visited by the Police! Remember the age of criminal responsibility in England is 10 years of age so this one applies to your children too! When information is out there, it's out there!
- **DON'T** tell your child to fight back. This can result in an escalation of problems

- **DON'T** tell your child to “Toughen up, lots of people get bullied, you have to learn to deal with it!” There is always a power imbalance when a child is being victimised and adults need to intervene to redress the power imbalance

### Do:

- **DO** contact the school and ask to speak with the person who is responsible for tackling bullying. If the bullying is taking place outside of school but involves pupils at your child's school, still make contact, they are required to take action.
- **DO** look at your child's school bullying prevention (anti-bullying) policy which will help you understand what actions the school will take. If your child attends a special school but is experiencing bullying in the community because of a disability, it could be a 'Hate Crime' and should be [reported to Cheshire Police](#).
- **DO** reassure your child and ask them what they think the school could do to make them feel safe in school. Their ideas can then be shared with the school and used to inform any support plans
- **DO** contact the [Education Welfare Service](#) at Cheshire East Council if school attendance is an issue
- **DO** screenshot any offending remarks that have been made on social media to provide evidence of the victimisation and keep [a diary of events \(PDF, 172KB\)](#)
- **DO** contact the police on 101 if your child has suffered a serious assault
- **DO** model a positive and considered approach to the problem (harder said than done, we know)! This will give your child an extra sense of security and reassurance

### Extra help and support

- Anti-bullying Alliance: [anti-bullying tool for parents and carers](#)
- If you would like support and advice, you can talk to a family support worker at Bullying UK on their confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222. You can also share experiences and advice with other parents on the [Family Lives Forum](#)
- [Kidscape](#) is small charity that provides information, training, and support for parents and children facing problems to do with bullying. They provide a parents helpline on **020 7823 5430 (Mon-Tues, 10am-5pm)**
- [Think you Know](#) - for advice on all things digital safety
- [Domestic Abuse Hub](#)
- [Gingerbread](#) - a national charity that supports single parents
- [Internet Matters](#) – for more information about cyberbullying and online safety

- [Cheshire East Local Safeguarding Children's Board](#) – for information on all aspects of keeping children safe
- [Am I a bully?](#) If you think your child is bullying others, this BBC guide may help them reflect on their behaviour