



# One minute guide

## Bullying

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### What is bullying?

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as the 'repetitive, intentional hurting of a person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.' Some schools use the useful mnemonic of 'STOP' (Several Times On Purpose) to distinguish bullying from the one-off or accidental hurting of a child or children. Most of the information in this guide relates to schools, however the information is relevant to practitioners working in a variety of settings.

Bullying can take several forms. Some are obvious e.g. physical assault, intimidation, threats and name-calling. Others are more subtle and harder to identify immediately e.g. exclusion or a certain look or sign that conveys meaning.

The focus of some bullying can be specific e.g. racist, homophobic, sexual or predicated on any discernible difference e.g. body shape or disability.

The most authoritative descriptions of different types of bullying can be found at the websites of the [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#) and [Child Line](#).

Cyber bullying (also called 'online bullying') is when a person or a group of people use the internet, email, online games or any other kind of social media or digital technology to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else.

Bullying can obviously make victims' lives miserable, frightening and even unbearable – affecting their happiness, fulfilment, learning, wider success and safety.

Bullying tends to be more common in schools in Key Stage 2 (7-11) and Key Stage 3 (11-14). It's thought that at earlier ages, children do not really think very much about differences between them, and at later ages young people have learned to tolerate and celebrate differences. However, bullying can still occur at these young and older ages; it's just less common.

### What is the law?

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. abusive name calling, threatening phone calls, emails or text messages and hate crimes (against specific groups such as ethnic groups or gay or trans-gender people) ([guide](#)).

By law, [Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school. All teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is. Good practice, not the law, strongly suggests that teachers, pupils and parents should be involved in deciding the policy and how it will be implemented.

Schools must also follow anti-discrimination law as set out in the guidance [Equality Act 2010 and Schools](#). This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school.

## What should practitioners do if they suspect bullying?

Practitioners should:

- Discuss the issue with a colleague and/or their line manager;
- Access the organisation's anti-bullying policy to see what they should do; and
- Leave the issue in the hands of an appropriate manager but ensure that they have arranged to review the actions and situation in a few days and weeks' time.

## What support is available?

There are several options for children and young people to seek help including:

**A teacher or other member of staff** such as a learning mentor or teaching assistant. It can be very hard for a young person to tell an adult, partly because they fear it might make the bullying worse and partly because adults aren't always easily available in private

**Their parent or carer** are usually able to understand them more fully as an individual, be able to articulate their concerns more clearly to those in authority and to oversee and monitor action

**Their class or school council** which may have a role in upholding school rules and codes of behaviour

**Their friends** who may often be able to give advice and offer protection

Most schools in Leeds have staff who have been trained to both assess a child's emotional literacy and also to organise small group interventions to help enhance the skills of emotional literacy. Such assessment and intervention could be useful for both victim and bully(ies), although not in the same group. If this is felt to be insufficient, the School can refer them to the Cluster's ([guide](#)) Support and Guidance meeting to seek help from their multi-professional team which includes mental health support.

Other ways to seek support include:

Contacting the [Market Place](#), tel: 0113 2461659 which offers information and counselling for young people aged 13-25

Seeking help from the child or young person's GP who may be able to refer them to emotional health counselling and support

Visiting the [MindMate](#) website which has a [worried about bullying page](#) and provides a range of helplines and advice. 'Mindmate' is Leeds' own emotional wellbeing and mental health website. It also has advice for parents, carers and practitioners who work with young people.

Contacting [Childline](#) on 0800 1111

Contacting [Bullying UK](#) tel: 0808 8002222