



## Children and Young People's Services

# A Parent's Guide to Reporting Bullying

### Bullying Can Take Many Forms

It can include verbal and physical abuse; causing humiliation or embarrassment; damaging or taking property; preventing others talking to the target of the bullying. A bully does not have to be a stranger, they can be a Teacher, Carer/Support Worker or someone your child/young person considers to be a friend. Bullying can occur in school, at a youth/social club, in the street, via phone or text message or through social media.

This guide primarily focuses on bullying that occurs in, or on the way to or from, school. If your child/young person is targeted by bullies outside of school, then you may wish to visit the websites listed at the bottom of this guide for information, guidance and advice.

### What You Can Do

Encourage your child/young person to talk about their experiences; this can make it easier to spot if there are problems. If your child/young person reports that they are being bullied reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you and that you are there to support them. Listed below are the steps you can take to report bullying to the school:

1. If your child/young person is at primary school write a letter to their teacher; if at secondary school write to their head of year. Outline the incidents of bullying, who has been doing the bullying and include the name of any witnesses to the bullying. Also request the school's Anti-bullying policy. Make sure you put a date on the letter and keep a copy.
2. If the bullying continues, or the school do not appear to have followed their anti-bullying procedure, write to the head teacher including a copy of the original letter sent in step 1.



3. Contact the Chair of governors, again with copies of previous correspondence. The head Teacher is accountable to the Governors.

## **Additional Actions**

- Make a note of any contact you have with school, including dates, with whom you spoke and what was discussed.
- If you attend any meetings relating to the bullying write a letter to the school summarising any action points agreed and keep a copy.
- If the school fails to deal with the bullying, you may have a discrimination claim under the Equality Act 2010. You may also be able to challenge the school's failure to act under their public sector equality duty.

## **Extra help**

The age of criminal responsibility in the UK is 10. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, if the bully is 10 or older and has assaulted your child/young person (this is both verbal and physical), you can contact the local police. Your local Police Force will have a School Liaison Officer trained to deal with these situations. If the offense is serious enough, then there may be criminal charges. You do not need the school's permission to contact the police if you feel there has been an assault on your child/young person.

## **Disability Hate Crime**

Any criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability or perceived disability is a disability hate crime. If the bullying takes the form of an assault (see above) and is perceived to be because of a disability, it could be a hate crime.

To conclude, schools are not always willing to accept that bullying is taking place and do not always take steps to solve bullying. It is important not to be put off by negative responses from a school; be consistent with your request for the bullying to be stopped. Be careful not to lose your temper, keep focused and clear with your communication. If you are having difficulty getting bullying stopped, you can seek advice from our Specialist Family Support Officers.

Your child/young person has a right to access their education free from bullying.



## **Other Resources**

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

For further support contact:

Tel: 0800 781 1444

Email: [cypservices@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:cypservices@guidedogs.org.uk)