

# Parents guide to **Bullying**

Our school policy defines bullying and outlines the approach we take to bullying at Bedford Drive Primary School; it also describes how to recognise if your child is being bullied and what to do about it.

This document gives additional information about bullying, and how parents, teachers and pupils can work together to stop it.



# What is bullying?

Although there isn't a legal definition of bullying, the **Government** define it as:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, [usually repeated over time] that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”

*(Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies; DfE, March 2014).*

**Bedford Drive Primary School** define bullying as:

“Any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening, threatening behaviour by an individual or other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for victims to defend themselves.

OR

**STOP** – it happens Several Times On Purpose.

Bullying is unkind and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victims.



## Key Facts:

Bullying can happen  
anytime and  
anywhere

It can happen face-to-  
face or on-line

It can be verbal,  
physical or  
psychological

# What to do if your child is being bullied?

- Give praise to your child: letting them know that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Listen: it's hard for us as parents not to react, but just listening to their feelings will be the biggest help. These feelings may seem minor to you, but for them they are big and very real.
- Don't tell them to fight back: this could see them end-up in trouble themselves or they could get hurt. Listen to any ideas they may have about stopping the situation and also speak with the school.
- Make them feel better: Bullying can destroy confidence, so make-sure they feel valued at home and chat to them about how they can make themselves feel better, maybe by taking some exercise, or doing an activity they love.
- Talk about what the best outcome for them: find out what they want to happen and let them tell you how you can help. If you feel like there is a danger to your child, you **MUST** take action.
- See our policy and procedure on bullying: we are here to listen to any concerns you have.



# Why doesn't Bedford Drive Primary School just get rid of Bully's?

Parents may feel surprised when a school doesn't automatically exclude children who are bullying others. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Firstly, it could be unrealistic to exclude every child that had been accused of bullying – in some schools this number could become very large;
- There are ways of helping a bully improve their behaviour and we believe schools should offer support and advice in doing so – simply passing the problem onto another schools just means that others will suffer. This isn't to say that the option of exclusion won't arise if the behaviour doesn't improve.

Understanding why the school is doing what they are doing is key and we will work with you along the way; generally children who are being bullied don't want to see the other child punished, they just want it to stop – this is key in our thinking of handling any bullying situations in our school.

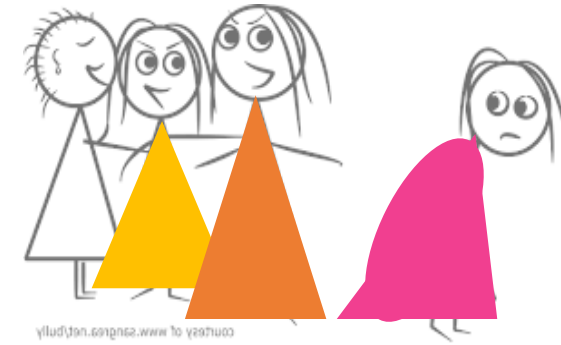


# What if the bullying doesn't stop?

- It's a good idea to keep a diary of the incidents as they occur. This should include:
  - *Who did what;*
  - *What did they say;*
  - *How often it happened;*
  - *Where and when did it happen;*
  - *A log of any texts, emails or comments.*
- Speak with us again. It's a good idea to explain to your child that you are going to do this and also agree with them when will be best for you visit (maybe when the rest of the children have gone home). It's important that your child understands the importance of you doing this as they could worry that things will get worse.
- When you speak with us, give the specific details from your diary. Although you will rightly feel upset, try to remain calm – we will set-out exactly what the next steps will be and will also advise you what you should do.
- You can review our anti-bullying policy, which is available on the schools website or via the School Office. You can ask us to look at this with you as we make a plan to address the situation and any worries you have. You can also ask us to tell you exactly when we'll be back in touch.
- If, after speaking with us again, you are not satisfied that the situation has improved, you can contact the Governors. If you feel that after contact with the Governors there has been no further improvement, you can contact the Local Authority. They will have a specific person who deals with anti-bullying and they will be able to advise you. Once again, it's good to ensure you've kept your diary of incidents up-to-date.

# What if my child is the bully?

- If it may come as a shock to hear that your usually well-behaved child has been accused of bullying others. Your natural instinct is likely to want to defend and protect your child. However, before you dismiss the claims, it is important that you listen to what the school has to say. In our experience, it is unlikely that a parent will complain to us about bullying at the start, so there could have been a period of unhappiness before we make you aware. There is an expectation from school that you will take the claims seriously and, if after an investigation the schools find the claims to be true, you will work with us to find a solution.
- Remember that your child is not bad; when you talk with them about these claims, try to stay calm and remind them that you love **them**, however you are disappointed with their **behaviour**.
- Listen to their side of the story – if they deny it, come and visit us in school and chat with the teacher. Again keep calm and listen to everything that has to be said before you react.
- Chat to your child about how the other person may feel; they may not realise how their actions have hurt the other person, or even that they have actually been bullying them.
- Speak to your child about their confidence, whether they feel they've made friends and if they feel happy – content and happy children are rarely the ones who typically bully.



# Why do children bully?

Children who are involved in bullying generally do so either **periodically** (i.e. they're lashing out suddenly) or **chronically** (i.e. they have a long-standing problem with this kind of behaviour).

**Periodically:** There are many reasons why a child may start bullying unexpectedly; It could be that they've been bullied themselves and they're replicating the negative behaviour they're experiencing – it could also be because:

They feel rejected or upset after an argument with someone close

They're jealous of a sibling or peer

They're under stress – maybe at school

They're reacting to a problem at home – separation or bereavement

**Chronically:** Some children appear to go from incident to incident, continually bullying others. This is something that should be particularly concerning, as they are likely to be excluded from mainstream education for this kind of behaviour. Those who bully in this way could:

Have poor social skills / empathy


Be lacking in firm behavioural limits

Feel different or inadequate

Be exposed to others that have a positive attitude to violence

Could receive harsh and / or excessive punishment

# Top Tips: How to prevent bullying



- ✓ *Be a good role model: Treat others with respect; your child is learning from you all the time.*

- ✓ *Show empathy to others: talk to your child about how others might feel in various situations such as TV programmes, real-life or books.*

- ✓ *Be open: Chat openly with your children about bullying and show them that there is no need to feel silly with any worries.*

- ✓ *Speak about the types of bullying: It's not always physical - it can be name-calling, leaving someone-out, spreading rumours or making someone do something they don't want to.*

- ✓ *Talk about how to avoid cyber-bullying (see next page for a guide to share with your child).*



## How to Keep Safe from Cyber-Bullying

1. *Always ask before you send a picture or information that other people could share. Pictures could end up anywhere on the internet, with lots of people seeing it - what you think was a joke can be seen by lots of people and could be upsetting for the other person.*

2. *Don't give out personal information - although you may trust your new friends, you don't know their friends.*

3. *Always keep your password safe - never share it with your friends.*

4. *Keep any nasty messages or texts you may get, block the person who sent it and tell an adult.*



# Further help and advice...

