

## Help for children

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### *ChildLine*

Freepost NATN1111, London E1 6BR  
Freephone: 0800 1111 (24 hours)  
Textphone: 0800 400 222  
(Mon-Fri 9.30am-9.30pm.  
Weekends 9.30am-8pm)  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

ChildLine is the UK's free helpline for children and young people. It provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with any problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

### *Get Connected*

Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (everyday 1-11pm)  
Email: [help@getconnected.org.uk](mailto:help@getconnected.org.uk)  
[www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

Free confidential telephone and email helpline finding young people the best help whatever the problem.

### *Victim Support*

Victim Supportline: 0845 30 30 900  
(Mon-Fri 9am-9pm; Sat-Sun 9am-7pm)  
Email: [supportline@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:supportline@victimsupport.org.uk)  
[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

Offers free confidential information and support to people affected by crime or victimisation.

## Help for parents and teachers

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### *Bullying: a guide to the law*

This publication can be downloaded from the National Children's Bureau website at [www.ncb.org.uk/resources/res\\_detail.asp?id=701](http://www.ncb.org.uk/resources/res_detail.asp?id=701) or purchased for £4.95 from the Children's Legal Centre, [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

### *Bullying online*

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

Provides advice for children, parents and teachers. Website contains legal advice and information about mobile phone, internet and racist bullying, details of school bullying policies, and sample letters of complaint/concern. Also provides an email advice service.

### *Department for Education and Skills*

[www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

Provides information, resources and advice about bullying for parents, teachers and pupils.

### *Kidscape*

Bullying Helpline (for parents): 08451 205 204  
(Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)  
Website: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Offers training, publications, videos, and teaching packs on how to deal with bullying. Send a large SAE with 6 first class stamps for a bullying pack.

### *Young minds in our schools*

This is a comprehensive guide for teachers and others working in schools, written by Peter Wilson, child psychotherapist and former Director of YoungMinds. It explores the issues surrounding the emotional well-being and mental health of pupils. Available from YoungMinds for £8.95.

### *YoungMinds*

PO BOX 52735, LONDON EC1P 1YY  
Office telephone: 020 7336 8445  
YoungMinds Order Line: 0870 870 1721  
Parents Information Service: 0800 018 2138  
(Monday and Friday 10am-1pm, Tuesday and Thursday 1-4pm, Wednesday 1-4pm and 6-8pm)  
Fax: 020 7336 8446  
Email: [enquiries@youngminds.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@youngminds.org.uk)  
Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

YoungMinds is the national charity committed to improving the mental health of all babies, children and young people. YoungMinds Parents Information Service is a free confidential telephone service providing information, advice and details of other national/local services to any adult with concerns about the mental health of a child or young person.

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To obtain further copies of this leaflet (ref L09), call the YoungMinds Order Line on 0870 870 1721. © YoungMinds 2004. Reprinted 2005.

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Bullying:  
why it  
matters

*Most children will be affected by bullying at some time.*

## What is bullying?

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Bullying is aggressive behaviour that is intended to intimidate or persecute other people through threats or superior force. It is quite common amongst children and can be devastating. Bullying can take many forms. It may include calling other children nasty names, teasing or spreading unkind stories about them. It can also be physical – pushing, hitting, kicking. Sending cruel and hurtful text messages and intimidating people whilst photographing them with a phone camera are also distressing examples of bullying.

Many children, of course, get into fights and disagreements from time to time and teasing and name-calling can all be done in a spirit of fun and playfulness. However, when this kind of behaviour becomes persistent and threatening, singling out children who cannot stand up for themselves, or even those you might expect to be able to do so, then bullying can become a major problem for all concerned.

## Is bullying normal?

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Many children get involved in bullying at some time during their schooldays – they may be bullied themselves, they may bully someone else, or they may see a friend being bullied. Bullying is more common in primary school than you might expect. In fact, most children behave aggressively sometimes, but it is only a minority of children who become regular bullies. Like all children, they need to learn that it is unfair and wrong to bully others. The important thing to remember is that any form of bullying can be very disturbing for the child being bullied.

## Why do children bully?

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Children can bully for all sorts of reasons. Some may bully because they enjoy the sense of power and feel that they can get away with it. Bullies are not always unpopular and may often have the support of their friends. They may or may not understand or care how much it hurts to be bullied – and they may think the bullied child deserves or 'is asking for it'. Some bullies, however, may be bullied themselves and many may have been badly treated in their families. They may not be at all sure of themselves – troubled, pressured by school or family life, or even depressed – and deal with their own fears by frightening others.

Some bullies will feel isolated and ashamed of the damage they cause. They may even come to believe they are bad and worthy only of punishment. They may feel frightened that no-one is stopping them. There is evidence that aggressive behaviour which is not effectively challenged in childhood can sometimes carry on into adult life, leading to violence and crime.

## Boys and girls can often bully in different ways

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Name-calling and teasing are the most common types of bullying, but a lot of boys also use their physical strength to bully others. Girls are more likely to rely on excluding someone from a group or spreading hurtful stories about them. This can be just as upsetting.

## Does bullying matter?

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It can sometimes be difficult for adults to understand the distress and misery bullying causes, especially if the bullying is 'only' teasing or name-calling. But being persistently teased or called names, like any other kind of bullying, can make children very unhappy. It can seriously interfere with their school-work, and they may

often not want to go to school for fear of what might happen to them.

Being picked on can mean children develop a low opinion of themselves. Anyone who is bullied for a long time may come to believe they deserve it. Being bullied regularly can be associated with problems later on in life as well. Some adults who were bullied as children find they often get depressed, lack self-confidence and feel resentful.

## What can be done?

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Schools can do a lot to stop bullying happening and should have a clear, well publicised policy on bullying. Research shows that when everyone involved in the school – teachers, pupils, parents and non-teaching staff – takes a strong and open stand against bullying, it is far less common. It must be made clear that everyone should be respected – and pupils have a right not to be bullied. It is especially important that schools encourage pupils to accept that it is not wrong to 'tell'. Children also need to be sure that something will be done to stop the bullying, otherwise they might not tell. A whole school policy on bullying is the best way to do this. Schools can also help young people learn skills of mediation, conflict resolution and support. Befriending and 'buddying' schemes can also play a useful part.

Children who have been badly bullied may be helped to regain self-confidence and assert themselves better through counselling or therapy. Children who bully others may be less easy to help if they do not think they have a problem. Some, however, may be depressed or frightened by what they do and can also benefit from counselling.

A list of organisations that help parents, teachers and children deal with bullying can be found overleaf.