

***This factsheet explains what bullying is and why it takes place. It looks at some ways you can try to prevent bullying from happening or to stop it when it is happening.***

*What is bullying?*

*Where does bullying happen?*

*Is bullying a significant problem?*

*How can I tell if my child is being bullied?*

*What can you do if you find out your child is being bullied?*

*What can you and your child do together if your child is being bullied?*

*Other things you and your child can do if your child is being bullied*

*What should the school be doing to try and prevent bullying from taking place?*

*Should clubs and other services be doing anything to prevent bullying?*

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### ***What is bullying?***

Bullying is when a person is deliberately hurt by one or more individuals. This can be physical or emotional. Often, a person may be bullied because they are seen to be different in some way. If a person has a learning disability, this can often be seen as a difference and may lead to them experiencing some form of bullying.

Bullying can take a number of different forms including:

- name calling
- fighting, pushing, kicking
- teasing, making fun
- nasty text messages or phone calls.
- being ignored or left out
- stealing personal items
- swearing
- being attacked or abused because of disability, religion, gender, sexuality, appearance or colour

### ***Where does bullying happen?***

Bullying can take place anywhere. It can happen:

- at school
- at an after school club
- on the journey to and from school or an after school club
- on school transport
- at a leisure centre
- at a short breaks centre
- at home

### ***Is bullying a significant problem?***

Research shows that one in two school pupils think bullying is "a big problem" or "quite a big problem" in their school. It also showed that one in two pupils in Year 5 have been bullied.

Bullying is a very significant problem for children who have a learning disability. Bullies often see children with a learning disability as an easy target. This could be because they may not be able to defend themselves, or they may not be able to communicate what has happened to them. This means that levels of bullying are higher for children who have a learning disability.

### ***How can I tell if my child is being bullied?***

- If your child is being bullied it may have an impact on how they act and feel. If your child's behaviour alters then it may be a sign that they are being bullied. Some common changes include:
- your child may no longer want to go to the place where the bullies are. This could be their school or after school club
- your child may become very quiet and withdrawn
- your child may become aggressive towards others
- your child may become unhappy, sad or even depressed
- your child may often pretend to be ill to avoid going to the place where the bullying is happening
- your child may start to lose their belongings
- your child may come home with damaged or missing clothes
- your child maybe without money they should have
- your child may have scratches or bruises

### ***What can you do if you find out your child is being bullied?***

The most important thing you can do is make sure that your child knows it is safe for them to let someone know that they are being bullied. If your child does not use speech you could make up a **sign, symbol** or picture that your child could use to show they are being bullied.

- Call Childline Tel: 0800 1111

If your child does let you know that they are being bullied, there are many things that you can do. You can:

- listen
- speak to their friends
- let your child know that you believe them
- reassure your child that it is not their fault
- keep a bullying diary
- contact your child's teacher and explain the situation and discuss ways to try and resolve the problem
- If this does not work then you can contact the head of the school and if necessary the chair of governors.
- encourage your child to keep telling

### ***What can you and your child do together if your child is being bullied?***

The first and most important thing that your child should do if they are being bullied is to let someone they trust know. This could be:

- a parent/carer
- a teacher
- a club leader
- a friend.
- someone they trust

If a child does let someone know, and the bullying does not stop, then it is important that they try and let someone else know.

### ***Other things you and your child can do if your child is being bullied***

Although letting someone know is the most important thing your child should do, there are other things you and your child can do which may help to stop the bullying. These include:

- if the bullying takes place on the way to school or to an after school club, you may be able to change the route to avoid the bully or bullies
- if the bullying takes place in a club then your child may be able to change groups
- if the bullying takes place on the school bus service, then you could ask to change seats on the bus and inform the bus company
- keeping a diary of what the bully does. This could then be used later
- developing a group of friends that your child can walk to school or to different lessons with. This may make it harder for the bully to pick on your child.
- tell your children you love them and do what you can to make their lives more enjoyable – it will help to make them feel good about themselves.

### ***What should the school be doing to try and prevent bullying from taking place?***

Since 1999 all schools are legally required to have a bullying policy. This policy should explain what methods the school will use to try and stop bullying taking place.

There are many methods that a school can use. The methods a school uses will depend upon the needs of the pupils.

These are just a few of the ideas that a school can use:

- holding an anti bullying day/bullying awareness
- informing pupils of where they can get help and advice
- listening to pupils problems and treating them seriously
- setting up a befriending/peer mentoring scheme
- setting up a scheme where pupils can report bullying anonymously.
- preventative work
- reactive work

- whole school approach
- behaviour policy
- peer support
- teachers training along with all staff
- parents awareness workshops

***Should clubs and other services be doing anything to prevent bullying?***

It is not a legal requirement for clubs and services to have a bullying policy. However it is good practice for them to have one. You can contact your local club or service directly to find out if they have a bullying policy.

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***Key Terms:***

1. ***Sign*** - an action or gesture made with your hands, face or body.
2. ***Symbol*** - a picture that represents a word

***This document was approved by Childline West Midlands on 19 March 2008***

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