



Information for parents and carers

Anti-Bullying Week provides an opportunity for us to talk openly about the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people and take action to stop it. **This Anti-Bullying Week we call on children and young people to take the lead on creating a future without bullying – using new technologies to promote positive communication and relationships rather than being held back by cyberbullying.**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) has been coordinating Anti-Bullying Week since 2007 and thanks to the enthusiasm of children and young people, their teachers, and their parents and carers, the week is now firmly established in the school calendar.

What is bullying?

ABA defines bullying as **the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.** Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological and includes behaviour such as:

- name calling
- spreading hurtful stories
- excluding someone from groups and breaking up friendships
- making demeaning comments about gender, culture, religion or sexuality
- making demeaning comments about a disability or illness
- taking possessions or money
- hitting, pushing or kicking.

Cyberbullying has the same effect as face-to-face verbal or psychological bullying but it takes place via mobile phones, emails or texting. The behaviour can be carried out by an individual or a group and could include: sending hurtful texts; spreading rumours through social networking sites; uploading private or distorted images or film; sending abusive comments through gaming sites; and assuming a false identity to cause harm or mischief.

The aims for Anti-Bullying Week 2013 are:

- to ensure all children and young people are equipped to recognise and challenge bullying behaviour wherever it happens – whether face to face or in cyberspace
- to equip schools, colleges and youth service leaders with resources to encourage youth led anti-bullying initiatives and the positive use of new technologies
- to educate those who support and work with children to recognise those who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying through new technologies – encouraging an inclusive approach to all e-safety education.

What signs should parents and carers look out for?

It is important that parents and carers recognise the signs that may tell them if a child or young person is either being bullied or bullying – what might they be doing, saying or feeling. If you suspect that this may be happening, look out for the following signs. You may see one or more signs, for example your child could:

- show signs of stress – being moody, silent or crying, or bullying a younger sibling or friend
- make excuses to miss school, such as stomach complaints or headaches (or your child may be skipping school altogether)



- seem upset after using the internet or mobile, or change their behaviour – for example, no longer wanting to look at new text messages immediately – and be secretive and unwilling to talk about their online activities and phone use
- be withdrawn in their behaviour
- have more bruises or scrapes than usual
- change their eating habits
- have torn clothes, school things that are broken or missing, or have ‘lost’ money
- sleep badly
- wet the bed.

There could be other reasons for these signs.

- Could there be anything else bothering your child?
- Could there be changes in your family life like a new baby, or divorce or separation that may be affecting your child’s behaviour?

How should parents and carers respond?

- **If you think your child is being bullied, don’t panic – try to keep an open mind.** Your key role is listening, calming and providing reassurance that the situation can get better when action is taken. Provide a quiet, calm place where they can talk about what is happening.
- **Listen and reassure them that coming to you was the right thing to do.** It may not be easy for a child to talk about being bullied so it is important to try to find out how they are feeling, what has happened, when and where. Though at this stage it is not so much about establishing a set of facts as encouraging, talking and listening.
- **Assure them that the bullying is not their fault and that you are there to support them.** Remind them that they can also have the support of family and friends.

- **Find out what the child or young person wants to happen.** Help them to identify the choices available to them and the potential next steps to take; and the skills they may have to help solve the problems.
- **Discuss the situation with your child’s school.** The law requires all schools to have a behaviour policy that sets out the measures that will be taken to encourage good behaviour and respect for others and to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Parents can get advice and support from the Parentline helpline on 0808 800 2222 or visit www.familylives.org.uk

A child or young person needs the support of those adults closest to them and that of other adults who have a relationship of trust or authority with them. They may also find it helpful to talk to another young person they trust.

Additional advice for parents and carers relating to cyberbullying (provided by Childnet International)

1. **Don’t deny access to technology.** This may prevent your child from speaking to you about cyberbullying. When we asked a group of pupils about why they wouldn’t tell someone, if they were being cyberbullied, their main response was that they were worried the technology that they use on a daily basis would be taken away from them.
2. **Discuss cyberbullying with your child.** Explore the tools available together and know how to report nasty messages.
3. **Save the evidence.** Encourage your child to save the evidence of any messages they receive. This is so they have something to show when they do report the cyberbullying.
4. **Don’t reply.** Most of the time the bully is looking for a reaction when they’re teasing or calling someone nasty names. Tell your child not to reply, if they do they’re giving the bully exactly what they want. Instead, they should tell someone about what they have seen.



What not to do

Young people have asked us to make sure parents and carers are made aware of the things that *won't* help.

- Don't let your anger or fear get in the way of an open discussion.
- Don't disbelieve or mistrust what you are hearing.
- Don't make the young person think it is their fault.
- Don't say that bullying has to be lived through as it is 'part of growing up' and they just have to put up with it.
- Don't give a sense that nothing can be done to make things improve.
- Don't take action before you really know what is going on.
- Don't pressurise or threaten anyone.

Where can a young person get more information and help?

ChildLine

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. Trained volunteers are on hand to provide advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Call Childline on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk

CyberMentors

CyberMentors is a safe social networking site providing information and support for young people affected by bullying. Young people aged 11–25 are trained as CyberMentors in schools and online, so that they can offer support and advice to other young people. CyberMentors are also supported by trained counsellors, who are available online if needed. For more information and free CyberMentors resources visit www.cybermentors.org.uk

Where can parents and carers get help to support a young person?

Anti-Bullying Alliance

The ABA website has a specific advice page for parents and carers that have concerns about bullying behaviour. Visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/parents-and-carers.aspx

Family Lives

Family Lives is a national charity that works for, and with, parents. You can get support and advice from the Parentline helpline on 0808 800 2222 or visit www.familylives.org.uk

Kidscape

Kidscape works UK-wide to provide individuals and organisations with the practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. It runs assertiveness training courses for children and young people under the age of 16, their parents or carers, and those who work with them. Kidscape operates a telephone helpline for the parents and carers of bullied children. Call 08451 20204 or visit www.kidscape.org.uk

Advisory Centre for Education

Offers advice for parents and children on all school matters.

Call 0808 800 5793 or visit www.ace-ed.org.uk

Children's Legal Centre

The Child Law Advice Line provides free legal advice and information covering all aspects of English law and policy affecting children.

Call 08088 020 008 or visit www.childrenslegalcentre.com



Support the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Sign up to the ABA parent and carer network to receive regular information on the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/parents-and-carers.aspx

Become a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

ABA membership is open to all individuals and organisations that support the vision of the Anti-Bullying Alliance to stop bullying and create safe environments where children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. Apply today by visiting www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Donate to the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

We are delighted when individuals support the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance either by raising funds or making donations. For fundraising information and support visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/donate. You can also make a personal donation by texting ABWK13 £2/£5/£10 to 70070 (e.g. ABW13 £5).

Acknowledgement

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The Anti-Bullying Alliance would like to offer our particular thanks to the following organisations that have for supporting Anti-Bullying Week.



Iris Worldwide



Random House Children's Publishers

Random House Children's Publishers is one of the UK's largest children's publishers. It's home to a range of award winning and best loved authors and illustrators including Jacqueline Wilson, Shirley Hughes, John Burningham and Terry Pratchett. For free resources, information and updates go to [@RHKidsUK_Edu](http://randomhousechildrens.co.uk)



The FA Tesco Skills Programme

The FA Tesco Skills programme is a nationwide initiative run by The Football Association and funded by Sport England and Tesco. The FA Tesco Skills Programme provides specialist, age appropriate football coaching for children which is child-centred and caters for all ability levels. The FA Tesco Skills coaching is free to schools, parents and clubs. To find your nearest after school and free holiday courses, visit TheFA.com/TescoSkills