

Mental Health & Wellbeing Across MSPS

Assisting your Child to Address Bullying.



As parents we are always anxious that our children may experience bullying throughout their schooling years and are not always sure how to help them if a bullying situation occurs.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is hurtful, aggressive and repeated behaviour that aims to embarrass, threaten or intimidate another person. It can be carried out by an individual or group towards one or more persons and is a complex social problem, which can occur in different environments such as schools.

5 Key Features of Bullying:

- The bully intends to inflict harm or fear upon a target.
- Aggression towards the target occurs repeatedly.
- The target doesn't provoke bullying behaviour by using verbal or physical aggression.
- Bullying occurs in familiar social groups.
- The bully is more powerful (reality or perceived) than their targets.

What Bullying Isn't.

Behaviours that don't constitute bullying include:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements where there is no power imbalance.
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection.
- One-off acts of meanness or spite.
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Recognising the Effects of Bullying.

Much bullying behaviour occurs out of sight of adults; however, you, as a parent, are well placed to notice behavioural changes in your child which may indicate the effects of bullying.

These could include:

- reluctance to go to school
- change in friendships resulting in unhappiness
- is frequently sick or sleeping problems
- moody, anxious, depressed or withdrawn
- complaints of being ignored or excluded
- damaged or missing belongings, or loss of money
- dishevelled appearance (torn or bloodied clothing)
- unexplained injuries such as bruises or cuts

While exhibiting one or more of these signs might not necessarily mean that your child is being bullied (or cyberbullied), these are important things to pay attention to if you suspect something is going on.

What can Parents Do?

- Don't over personalise
- Don't swoop in immediately and take over
- Don't minimize (under-react)
- Don't blame
- Have open conversations



Strategise with your Child.

- Teach your child not to react out of fear
- Have some slogans ready - and then walk away
- Ignore the bully
- Use a buddy system
- Talk to an adult

When it's Time to Step in

If things have escalated to a point where you need to step in and take more official action, tell your child you're going to help them and work with them so the situation doesn't become worse. Decide on the best way to do that together. Listen to your child carefully, hear the whole story, ask them how they see it, and ask what would be most helpful to them. Let the school know what is going on. Kids need to know that someone more powerful than the bully is on their side and can put a stop to the bullying.



Useful Website Links for further explanation and strategies:

Empowering Parents: <https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/child-and-teen-bullying-how-to-help-when-your-kid-is-bullied/>

BeYou - Bullying: <https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/relationships/bullying>

EVERY CHILD EVERYWHERE FEELS SAFE.

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