

**Unfortunately children and young people who have a disability or special educational needs (SEN) are statistically more likely to experience bullying at school or in their daily lives. Bullying remains the single biggest concern raised by children and young people with a disability or SEN.**

Bullying can occur for a number of reasons and it's unclear why some children/young people become targets for bullying. It can be difficult for most children and young people to understand why they are being bullied – but it can be especially hard for a child/young person with a disability to understand. It can also be harder for children and young people with a disability to understand that being bullied is not their fault and that they are not to blame for what is happening to them.

Bullying is any behaviour that hurts a child or young person – this could be physically or emotionally or both. Bullying can happen anywhere – at school or work, when out and about, at home or on-line.

Bullying behaviours are usually repeated over a long period of time and can include:

- Verbal abuse, such as name calling and gossiping
- Non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages
- Emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- Exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- Undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- Controlling or manipulating someone
- Racial, sexual, disablist or homophobic bullying
- Physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls
- On-line or cyberbullying

### **On-line or Cyberbullying:**

On-line or cyberbully is becoming an increasing common form of bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying happens on social networks like Facebook and twitter or mobile phones and can include spreading rumours, or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos. Sometimes the child or young person will know who is bullying them – however – they are more likely to be targeted by a fake or anonymous account. As the bully can stay “hidden” using cyberbullying it may increase the bullying behaviour. Children and young people who are being bullied on-line are more likely to feel that there is no escape as it can happen wherever they are at any time of day or night.

## Signs and symptoms of bullying:

**It can be hard for really hard for you to know whether your child or young person is being bullied.** Your child or young person may be too scared to tell you in case the bullying gets worse or they may feel that in some way they deserve to be bullied or that it is their fault. It also isn't always possible to spot the signs of bullying – and no one sign will show for certain that your child or young person is being bullied. You should look out for one or more of the following:

- Belongings getting “lost” or damaged
- Physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- Being afraid to go to school or to take part in an activity, being mysteriously ‘ill’ each morning, or skipping school
- Not doing as well at school or college
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully)
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping
- Bullying others

If you think your child or young person is being bullied the following resources and organisations can offer you more support advice and information.

## Resources

**Contact a Family** have produced some great resources to help parents and carers deal with bullying:

**Parent Guide to dealing with bullying:** <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/resource-library/parent-guide-dealing-with-bullying/>

**Bullying diary:** <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/resource-library/bullying-diary-for-parents/>

**Draft letter that can be sent in to your child's/young person's educational establishment if they are being bullied:** <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/resource-library/sample-letter-to-send-to-school-if-your-child-is-being-bullied/>

**Connected Magazine – Anti-bullying edition:** [http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/797535/connected\\_autumn\\_winter\\_2014.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/797535/connected_autumn_winter_2014.pdf)

**The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA):** have a SEN information hub: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/send-programme>. The ABA also offer a wide range of resources on bullying including cyber bullying and information for all stages of your child/young person's development: <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/if-youre-being-bullied>

The cyber bullying section offers separate information for parents and carers and young people: <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/cyberbullying-0>

**NHS Livewell:** have a really good section on their website for young people and mental health – this can be found at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/youth-mental-health/Pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx>.

**ACE Education:** have put together a useful section on tackling bullying in an educational setting: [www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/tackling-bullying/](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/advice/tackling-bullying/). Unfortunately they are no longer able to offer their advice line.

**The National Autistic Society (NAS):** have 2 very good guides on their website on bullying: Parent and Carer: <http://www.autism.org.uk/bullying>  
Young Person's: [www.autism.org.uk/23602](http://www.autism.org.uk/23602)

**Bullying UK (part of Family Lives):** offer a wide range of resources including general advice, for more information visit: <http://www.bullying.co.uk/>.

**Young Minds:** offer some good resources on bullying:

Parents and Carers: [http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for\\_parents/worried\\_about\\_your\\_child/bullying](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/worried_about_your_child/bullying)

Young People: [http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for\\_children\\_young\\_people/whats\\_worrying\\_you/bullying](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_children_young_people/whats_worrying_you/bullying)

**Kidscape:** equips young people, parents and professionals with the skills and resources to tackle bullying and safeguarding issues across the UK visit: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/what-we-do/resources>.

**BullyBusters:** provide support to children, young people and their parents/carers. The organisation was set up by LEAs in Liverpool, Merseyside but provides support nationally.

Kids: <http://www.bullybusters.org.uk/kids/>

Young People: <http://www.bullybusters.org.uk/teenagers/>

Parents: <http://www.bullybusters.org.uk/adults/advice/>

**NSPCC:** have a good section for parents and carers on bullying and cyberbullying: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/keeping-children-safe/>

**Childnet International:** have a mission to keep children safe on-line which includes tackling cyber-bullying. Parents and Carers: <http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>  
Young People: <http://www.childnet.com/young-people>

**CBBC:** have a section on their website for children and young people on bullying : <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13905962>

**NDCS:** put together a video - it is for all children who have a disability – especially those who are deaf or have hearing loss: [http://www.ndcs.org.uk/for\\_the\\_media/press\\_releases/deaf\\_teenager.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/for_the_media/press_releases/deaf_teenager.html)

**Childline:** have a good section on their website for children and young people – including advice and information on what to do if you are being bullied, if someone you know is being bullied and what to do if you are too scared to go to school: <http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/bullying.aspx>.

## Organisations

Sometimes it can really help to actually talk to someone. The following organisations have free-phone helplines that you (or your child/young person) can phone which offer confidential and impartial advice, information and support.

**Contact a Family:** <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/> have a Freephone parent/carer helpline: 0808 808 3555 (9.30am-5:00 pm, Monday-Friday) or email: [helpline@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cafamily.org.uk)

**NAS:** have a helpline which can offer support to parents/carers or to young people with ASD: 0808 800 4104 (10:00am – 4:00pm Monday to Thursday and 9:00am – 3:00pm Friday)

**Young Minds:** have a Freephone parent helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday between 9:30am-4pm)

**Bullying UK:** have a parent helpline which is provided by Family Lives this offers support, advice and information 0808 800 2222

**Bully Busters** offer a Freephone helpline for parents/carers: 0800 169 6928 they also have an on-line contact form: [http://www.bullybusters.org.uk/contact\\_us](http://www.bullybusters.org.uk/contact_us)

**NSPCC:** have trained counsellors offering free 24/7 help, advice and support to parents/carers: 0808 800 5000 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Child-line** offer free advice, support and information to children and young people. They offer a number of ways of getting in touch with them and accessing this support: Free-phone: 0800 1111

**1-2-1 on-line chat:** (with a trained counsellor): <http://www.childline.org.uk/Talk/Chat/Pages/OnlineChat.aspx>

**Young person message boards:** <http://www.childline.org.uk/Talk/Boards/Pages/Messageboards.aspx>

**Ask Sam:** (writing a letter to Sam or seeing what others have written): <http://www.childline.org.uk/Talk/AskSam/Pages/AskSam.aspx>

**Anti-Bullying Week:** Every year in November there is an Anti-Bullying week – these weeks are usually themed – and resource materials are produced to help support schools/ education providers, parents and children/young people. More information on this year's Anti-Bullying week can be found at: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/> or <http://www.bullying.co.uk/anti-bullying-week/>. The week aims to help children and young people to talk about bullying and to receive the right support from schools and parents/carers.

If you are concerned about your child/young person's behaviour and you suspect that they are bullied we would recommend visiting your GP as they may be able to refer you to local services.

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