



confident
HAPPY
children



*advice for parents and carers
of primary school children on
bullying*



**safer
scotland**
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

confident, happy

**This leaflet is for parents of pre-school and primary children.
There is a further leaflet for parents of teenagers.**

Bullying in schools is a serious issue. Children often experience difficulties in their relationships with others, and sometimes have experiences that make them feel hurt or damage their confidence and self esteem. Parents can help children meet the challenges of growing up so that they overcome difficulties, including being bullied or bullying others.

The leaflets provide information for parents to consider how to help and support their children to be confident and happy in their relationships with others.



ent happy children



*Learning for life –
Positive support and fair expectations*



*Not going well?
Support when things go wrong*



*Schools and bullying
What can they do to help?*



Useful contacts

LEARNING FOR LIFE

There are some useful life skills that you can help your child learn. These will help them:

- **become confident in themselves**
- **be strong when faced with bullying**
- **avoid bullying others**
- **recover from setbacks quickly**

Talking about feelings

Children often need encouragement to talk about the way they are feeling. You can help your child to understand and cope with their emotions by talking openly about both positive and negative feelings (such as pride, satisfaction, anger or jealousy).

By giving your child familiar and comfortable words and expressions to talk about how they are feeling, you are equipping them to release and resolve feelings. Bottled up feelings can get out of hand, and your child may end up hurting other people or feeling upset themselves.

Talking about feelings helps you and your child to think about how to cope with them better; it helps you work out ways of calming down when angry or frustrated; and helps them understand that it's OK to cry when upset, as well as laugh and smile when happy.

When parents and children feel comfortable talking about feelings together, parents may get to know much more quickly if their child is experiencing difficulties that require adult help.



getting on with others

Getting on with others takes practice. It starts within the family, as children learn to share, take turns and make compromises. A firm, fair and consistent approach to this at home means there are no surprises for children when faced with a variety of situations outside the home.

Children can benefit from opportunities to be with children of a similar age in school and out of school, where they can practice making friends. All children are different, and some may require the reassurance of being with a parent in new social situations while they develop confidence.

Children who have difficulties in making friends and behaving well socially may benefit from help and support at school. Schools may have learning programmes that help children develop social skills. Parents should approach their child's teachers if they have concerns.

problem solving

“ Learning to keep trying, even when things are difficult, is a quality that will help children in all aspects of life, particularly in relationships.

Learning in schools focuses on encouraging children to look at problems in different ways, and think of different solutions, before trying one they think will work. As a parent, you can help your child apply this approach to everyday social life.

”

Parents can also help children to deal with issues such as bullying by regarding it as a problem that can be solved – working with the school to look at the situation from all angles, and considering with children different options for solving the problem. Children who are being bullied must not feel that the problem is theirs to solve alone. But they may feel more respected and supported if their views are heard while the problem is being addressed.

Your child may not always be part of the problem, but he or she can often be part of the solution, by helping others.



positive expectations

“ As parents it is important to show that you expect your children to behave well towards others. By showing that you appreciate positive behaviour and that poor behaviour towards others should be improved, you are setting important boundaries for your child and at the same time you are acting as a good role model.

Children should also be able to expect others to behave well towards them and they need the skills to show others when they are not happy with the way they are being treated. Sometimes, they may need help with this, to develop assertiveness.

”

the **FRESH** code

Schools promote positive behaviour, which helps to reduce bullying. Parents can help children to think about getting on with others by encouraging them to follow this code:



Fair

be fair to others and expect to be treated fairly



Respect

be polite, and show care for others



Engage

be friendly and let others join in



Safe

avoid hurting others and if you are hurt, tell someone



Honest

try to tell the truth



SUPPORT WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

If your child is being bullied

All parents hope that their child will tell them as soon as there is a problem. But unfortunately, this doesn't always happen. It may be because the child feels confused, they feel it is their own fault, or they are worried about how their parents will react.

SIGNS OF BULLYING MAY INCLUDE:

- **a change in behaviour or mood**
- **obvious signs of physical hurt or damage to belongings**
- **unwillingness to go to school**
- **more clingy or more emotional than usual**

Any child can experience bullying – deliberate words or actions by other people to hurt them emotionally or physically. All children should expect that they will be supported if they feel hurt, that they will be helped to solve the problem, or that someone will take action to stop the bullying.

Children who feel confident of this will be more willing to tell someone, and will recover more quickly from their hurt.



YOUR SUPPORT:

- Make time to spend with your child – be in a position in which they can easily tell you about things.
- Listen and let your child know you care.
- Hear his or her feelings about what has happened.



YOUR HELP TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM:

- Help to sort out all the facts of the story – slowly and calmly.
- What does your child want to happen next? Involving your child in finding a solution can be empowering, and strengthen their ability to cope if a similar situation ever arises again.



TAKE ACTION:

- Be prepared to take action by speaking on your child's behalf to the school. Don't take matters into your own hands – the school should be a partner in sorting out the situation. Share all the facts that you know honestly and fairly.
- Keep on speaking up for your child until the matter has been resolved, but allow the school reasonable time to find out more and respond to you and your child.
- Take action which reassures your child, rather than embarrasses them. Keep calm and show fairness and respect to everyone involved.



IF your child is bullying someone else

No parent wants to hear that their child is involved in bullying someone else. Unfortunately, it does happen, although some incidents will be more serious than others. Try to accept the reality of the situation, and look to support both your child and the school to solve the problem. By doing this you are re-enforcing positive expectations you have set for your child, as well as supporting him or her to work through personal issues which may have been the cause of the bullying behaviour.

Your support:

- Listen to what others are telling you about your child's behaviour. Calmly ask your child's opinions and feelings about the situation.
- Continue to show your child that you care about them. It is the behaviour that is the problem, not your child, and behaviour can be changed.

Help to solve the problem:

- Consider reasons why your child may have bullied others. Is your child feeling insecure, or are there any other problems? You need not make guesses about this on your own. Ask your child and others who know your child, including school staff.
- Help your child to take responsibility to put things right. It takes courage to apologise, so show that you are proud of them for doing so.

Take action:

- If bullying has taken place outside school, the staff may appreciate being informed that you know your child was involved and that you want to help sort things out.
- Make sure you show others that, even though your child's behaviour has been disappointing, he or she still deserves to be treated fairly and with respect.



schools, positive behaviour and anti-bullying

You or your child should be able to speak to any member of staff in the school, if your child is involved in bullying incidents or if others are being bullied. The school should then take the same steps as a good parent; be supportive, help to solve the problem and if necessary take action to stop bullying.

*you can also expect
the school to follow
the FRESH CODE:*

- The school must hear all sides of the story – other young people may have different views about what is going on. The school will try to be **fair**.
- The school should treat all of the pupils involved with **respect** and dignity.
- The school will try to **engage** the pupils and parents in solving the problem.
- The school has a responsibility to ensure all pupils are **safe** while at the school.
- The school should discuss openly and **honestly** any bullying or other problems with parents of the pupils involved.

Schools are expected to have a number of measures in place to promote positive behaviour:

A positive school ethos – The school should feel welcoming and caring.

Rules and rewards – Clear school rules for both pupils and parents. Good behaviour is recognised with rewards such as certificates, and parents can help by showing appreciation.

Anti-bullying policy – All schools should have an anti-bullying policy which states how the school will prevent and respond to bullying.

Tackling discrimination – The school should help pupils to learn to treat others equally and to challenge prejudice.

Additional support – Sometimes pupils need extra help to learn or to cope with school life. Additional help should be discussed and planned with parents (for more information see back page).

Complaints – School handbooks should explain how parents can make a complaint if they feel the school has let them, or their children, down.

Parents have a responsibility to help schools meet the needs of their children. If anything happens in your child's life that may affect their learning, relationships or general well-being, such as an upset in the family, tell the school.



NEW APPROACHES TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-BULLYING

These initiatives are being supported by the Scottish Executive to help education authorities and schools promote positive behaviour.

Problem solving

Some schools are trying new approaches called restorative practices, which involves children in solving problems. Some schools have involved children as 'playground helpers' or 'peer mediators', to help when there are disagreements or difficulties between classmates. Restorative practices have been trialled in parts of Highland, Fife and North Lanarkshire.

School ethos

Some headteachers are developing their schools to be 'solution-oriented schools' or 'motivated schools'. These are initiatives that involve pupils and staff in building a positive atmosphere in school and respectful relationships between everyone in the school. Solution-oriented schools were first developed in Morayshire and Motivated schools were developed in Glasgow.

Learning programmes

Cool in School is a learning programme that helps children to learn communication skills, to express their feelings assertively and to solve problems. The Cool in School programme was first developed in Fife.

There are other practices to promote positive behaviour that are common in schools:

circle time

Involves children in their class groups sharing feelings, ideas and views.

Buddying schemes

Between older and younger pupils help to develop peer support.

Pupil councils

Often develop anti-bullying activities in their school.

You can ask your child's school about their involvement in these approaches – they may have developed some of their own, or adapted them to suit the school environment.



Sources of advice and information for parents

ParentLine Scotland

A free confidential helpline for parents and anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call them about any problem – big or small.

0808 800 2222

www.children1st.org.uk/parentline

Children 1st, 83 Whitehouse Loan,
Edinburgh, EH9 1AT

YoungMinds Parents Information Service

A free, confidential telephone service providing information and advice for any adult with concerns about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of a child or young person.

0800 018 2138

Open: Monday & Friday 10.00 am – 1.00 pm
Tuesday & Thursday 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm
Wednesday 1.00 pm – 5.00 pm &
6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

www.youngminds.org.uk/pis

YoungMinds, 102-108 Clerkenwell Road,
London, EC1M 5SA

Parentzone Scotland

An online resource for parents, guardians and others responsible for school-age children. With information about education in Scotland, and advice about how to support your child's learning.

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Enquire

The Scottish advice service for families of children with additional support needs.

0845 123 2303 (charged at local rate)
Open: Monday & Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Tuesday & Thursday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
& 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm,
Wednesday 8.00 am – 5.00 pm

info@enquire.org.uk

www.enquire.org.uk

Enquire, Children in Scotland,
5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh,
EH2 4RG

Kidscape

A national charity offering support and advice to parents of bullied children.

08451 205 204

www.kidscape.org.uk

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens,
London, SW1W 0DH

Enable

Scotland's learning disability charity.

0141 226 4541

enable@enable.org.uk

www.enable.org.uk

6th Floor, 7 Buchanan Street, Glasgow,
G1 3HJ

Commission for Racial Equality

Information and advice to people who have suffered from racial discrimination.

0131 524 2000

scotland@cre.gov.uk

www.cre.gov.uk/scotland

CRE Scotland, The Tun, 12 Jackson's
Entry off Holyrood Road, Edinburgh,
EH8 8PJ

Govan Law Centre

National organisation offering free legal advice and representation on educational matters, with a particular focus on the rights of disabled pupils and pupils with additional support needs.

0141 445 1955

advice@edlaw.org.uk

www.edlaw.org.uk

47 Burleigh Street, Glasgow, G51 3LB

Sources of advice and information for children

ChildLine Scotland's Anti-Bullying Line

Scottish helpline dedicated to listening to and helping young people who are concerned about bullying problems.

0800 44 11 11



ChildLine

A UK national helpline offering information and advice for children and young people concerned with any problem.

0800 11 11



Freepost 1111, Glasgow G1 1BR



www.childline.org.uk



For further contacts, please see the children's and young people's anti-bullying leaflets.

Newsround

Website from the BBC's popular children's news programme, with sections on bullying and school issues.

www.news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews





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This document is also available on the Scottish Executive
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