

What is bullying?

Bullying is any behaviour that hurts someone else, either physically or emotionally. Bullying usually happens over a long period of time, and is done on purpose to harm, provoke or upset another person. It can be done anywhere, and by anyone.

Types of bullying can include:

- Physical bullying: hitting, slapping, pushing, nipping, biting, spitting, breaking their possessions
- Verbal bullying: name calling, teasing, spreading rumours, taunting, threatening, constant criticism, discriminatory comments
- Cyber bullying: sending mean messages, making mean posts, threatening online, posting personal information
- Social abuse: isolating, controlling or manipulating, intimidating, humiliating, discrimination



Signs that your child is being bullied

Every young person is different, but typical signs that your child is being bullied may include:

- Appearing more withdrawn, low in mood or more anxious than usual.
- Having sudden outbursts of anger at home which can't be explained.
- Seeming less confident within themselves.
- Beginning to avoid school or refusing to go to school altogether.
- Complaining of headaches, stomach aches or feeling sick.
- Having unexplained physical injuries such as bruises or scratches.
- Personal belongings becoming damaged or missing.
- Difficulties in sleeping or having frequent nightmares.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoiding social situations.

Top tips for helping your child

Help your child build their self-esteem

- Tell them how much you love them and what makes them special.
- Gently challenge some of their negative beliefs about themselves.
- Encourage them to be themselves, and role model loving yourself for who you are.
- Help them to identify their qualities and strengths, and their sense of belonging.



Open up a conversation

At times, it can be difficult to discuss with your child how they're feeling, especially if you are concerned that they are having hard time. You might be worried that you don't know what to say or how your child could react or respond. When you start a conversation, there's a few things to consider:

- Find a suitable time and place.
- Be patient – remember it can be difficult for young people to gather their thoughts and feelings and find the right words to express themselves.
- Try not to feel disheartened at your first attempt, sometimes it can take a while to open up.
- Remain calm - it can be difficult to hear that your child is being bullied and struggling, try to remain calm and manage your own emotions.
- Give your child the space that they need – pressuring your child to talk about their experiences can adversely push your child away.

How do I start a conversation?

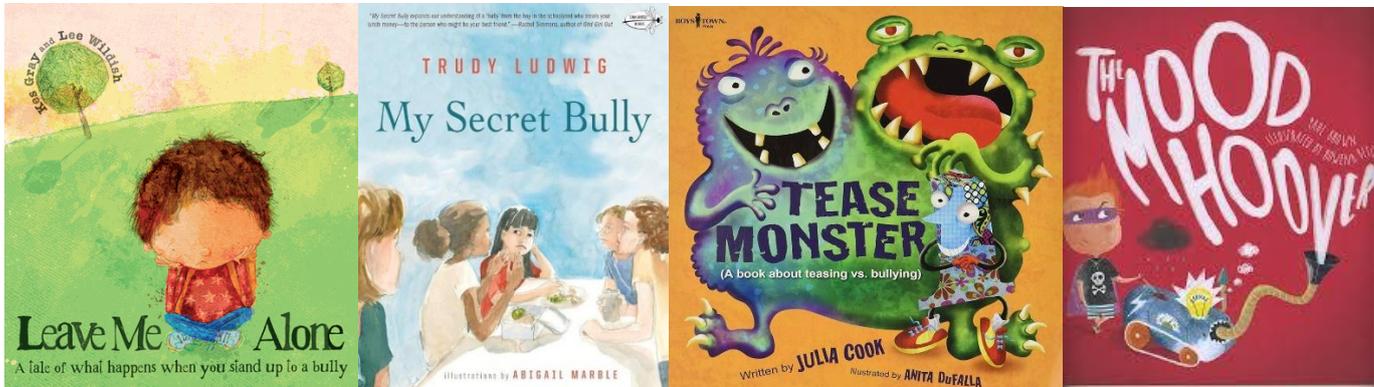
You've not seemed yourself in the past couple of weeks. Is there anything you want to talk about?

I remember you told me that you were upset about ___ last week. How are you feeling about it now?

I noticed you've been feeling ___ lately. I wondered if you wanted to talk about it?

If you ever need to talk to anyone, you know that I'm here for you?

Reading recommendations



- 'Leave Me Alone' by Kes Gray and Lee Wildish
- 'My Secret Bully' by Trudy Ludwig
- 'Tease Monster' by Julia Cook
- 'The Mood Hoover' by Paul Brown

Further support

Giving your child emotional support is very important, but they can only begin recovering from their experiences when the bullying has stopped and they feel safe again. You can find tips and advice to help you address the bullying on the following websites:

- <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/> - includes a parent advice line
- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

