

The law

Some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the police. These include:

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, eg name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

Call **999** if you or someone else is in immediate danger.

Schools and the law

By law, all state (not private) schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school. All teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is.

If you're reporting cyber-bullying, keep a record of the date and time of the calls, emails or texts - don't delete any messages you receive.

Reporting bullying

You should report bullying to your school in the first place - or someone you trust if it happens outside school, eg in a club or online.

School staff will deal with bullying in different ways, depending on how serious the bullying is.

Staff might deal with it in school, eg. by applying sanctions to those bullying, or they might report it to the police or other relevant agencies.

Headteachers have the legal power to make sure pupils behave outside of school premises (state schools only). This includes bullying that happens anywhere off the school premises, eg on public transport or in a town centre. School staff can also choose to report bullying to the police or local council.

Taking complaints further

Maintained schools

You can complain to the Department for Education by filling in the school complaints form.

Academies and free schools

You can complain to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) if:

- there's a problem with the school's complaints procedure
- the school is not following the terms of its funding agreement

You can complain to the Department for Education by filling in the school complaints form.

Bullying: “the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power”
- Anti-bullying Alliance



BULLYING CAN BE: PHYSICAL • VERBAL • EMOTIONAL • CYBER

How should I approach the school?

Step 1:

The first thing you should do is approach the school with your concern. Your first contact should be with your child's class teacher.

Step 2:

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Step 1, you should arrange to meet with a member of the senior management team.

Step 3:

If you are dissatisfied with the involvement of the SMT, you can write or arrange to meet the headteacher.

Step 4:

Although it is generally accepted that most complaints seldom get to this stage, a number still do and indeed some go further. At this stage, you can write to the chair of the school's governing body. Details about the process to follow will be available in the school's Complaints Policy.

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Useful websites

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) www.ace-ed.org.uk

Anti-bullying Alliance www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Department for Education www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school

Some top tips:

Get copies of the school's policies

The ones you will need will be the behaviour policy, the anti-bullying policy and the school's complaints procedure. Depending on your child's situation you may also want to read the equalities policy.

Talk to your child

Your child will need a lot of encouragement. They may be reluctant to tell you about the bullying. You can help by listening and reassuring them that it is not their fault. Try to build up their general confidence and give strategies they can use for helping themselves. Some of the websites in the useful links section have tips for children and young people on dealing with bullies.

Keep a record

When you are taking the matter up with the school it's a good idea to be sure of your facts. Keep a record of any bullying incidents with as much detail as you can. If your child has been physically injured you may want to take photos of the injuries. Include in your report any medical evidence.

Write down the impact that the bullying has had on your child. Has their behaviour changed, are they reluctant to go to school, are they anxious, withdrawn or not sleeping?

Formal complaint

If the bullying continues you can make a formal complaint in line with the school's complaints procedure. This will generally be first to the headteacher and then to the governors of the school.

If you are unsure of the initial approach to take, always try to be calm and keep things constructive.

If you are unhappy about the way you are being treated or communicated with, keep a record of each time this has happened.

If you feel you are being blocked for any manner of reasons, be calm, but persist in reaching who it is you need to speak to.

If you talk to anybody on the telephone, always make a note of the time, date and get their name.

When communicating in writing, keep copies of everything.

If necessary, make sure you copy the appropriate parties into any correspondences.