

PEGGY & FRIENDS

BULLYING

1. INTRODUCTION

Regardless of what anyone tells you, bullying is part of childhood and is present in every school or social group that children or young people belong to. It is a problem that children, who have a very obvious difference to others in their peer group, will have to deal with at some time or another.

It is easy for able-bodied children to pick on children who are different like children with limb loss by keeping them out of games in the playground or, by becoming physical towards them by taking advantage of their differences.

It is important that your child has a strong support system at home, school and socially and someone who they can confide in or to approach for help or advice. It is also important that they develop ways to deal with this problem.

2. WHAT IS A BULLY?

A bully is someone who:

- Intimidates or forces
- Dominates or imposes their will
- Doesn't listen to others
- Works on people's weaknesses
- Gets people to gang-up on others

3. WHO IS LIKELY TO BE A BULLY?

Bullies appear very powerful and they may even make it seem that the victim is responsible, but in reality, bullies are:

- Insecure or unhappy
- Self-hating
- Cowards at heart
- Unable to show their feelings

4. WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

- **TELL SOMEONE, SUCH AS AN ADULT, AN OLDER CHILD OR A FRIEND**
- Tell yourself that you don't deserve to be bullied and that you can get through this
- Avoid situations where bullying is possible by, for example, joining lunchtime groups such as a music group, language group or hobby group.
- Form a close group of friends to act as a 'buffer'
- Think about possible responses and practice them with your friends or family
- Be positive, confident and assertive and say NO to the bully
- Try distracting the bully by using humour or talking about something else or to someone else
- Try to ignore the bully and **DON'T SHOW THAT YOU ARE UPSET**

5. HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

- Give support to your child so that they know that they are not alone
- Praise them regularly for things that they achieve to maintain self-esteem
- Encourage them to talk to you about how they feel and listen to them.
- Comfort them if necessary but also try to teach them to find their own solutions.
- Discuss coping strategies and practice prepared responses
- Speak to their teacher or group leader
- Speak to their friends and classmates to provide support

6. HOW CAN OTHER ADULTS HELP?

- Give support to those who are bullied
- Use the group to influence behaviour
- **ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO TELL**
- Investigate the facts
- Meet the bullies and victims individually
- Inform the parents of the victim and bully
- Help bullies change behaviour