

BULLYING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:



"People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop."

Bullying can hurt someone both physically and emotionally and is usually repeated over time.

BULLYING AND CHILDREN WITH SEN

- Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) may be more vulnerable to bullying due to:
- Difficulty recognising bullying behaviour or knowing they're being bullied.
- Challenges understanding social cues or relationships.
- Struggles expressing themselves or reporting bullying.
- Being more isolated or having fewer friends for support.



TYPES OF BULLYING

- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, or gossiping.
- **Non-verbal:** Hurtful hand signs or text messages.
- **Emotional:** Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating someone.
- **Exclusion:** Ignoring or isolating someone.
- **Undermining:** Criticising or spreading rumours.
- **Physical:** Hitting or pushing.
- **Control:** Manipulating or taking possessions.

- **Prejudice and Discrimination:** Abusing someone based on race, disability, or other differences.
- **Online or Cyberbullying:** Threatening messages or embarrassing videos shared through social media or other platforms.



WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Encourage your child to speak up: They can talk to a trusted friend, teacher, or adult.

Keep a record: Write down incidents and dates to track what's happening.

Check the school's policies: Request their behaviour and anti-bullying policies (usually available on their website).

Talk to the school: Share your concerns with the teacher, SENCO, or headteacher.

Request a meeting: Discuss how the school is addressing the issue and ensure clear actions are in place.

WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD BE DOING

Schools have a responsibility to:

- **Listen to concerns:** Record incidents and communicate with parents.
- **Inform staff:** Ensure all staff are aware of the situation and are monitoring your child.
- **Support your child:** Create safe opportunities for your child to report incidents.
- **Monitor changes:** Look out for shifts in behaviour or mood and respond accordingly.
- **Address the bullying:** Use their behaviour policy to manage the situation and continue monitoring for improvement.

The Role of the SENCO

The SENCO has a vital role in protecting and supporting children with SEN and disabilities:

- Raising staff awareness about disability equality and bullying prevention.
- Ensuring children with SEN receive appropriate support to address bullying.
- Monitoring the impact of anti-bullying strategies on children with SEN.
- Supporting children with social and behavioural needs to prevent bullying behaviours.



LEGAL PROTECTIONS AGAINST BULLYING

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006:** Schools must have policies to encourage good behaviour and prevent bullying, shared with staff, pupils, and parents.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Schools must eliminate discrimination and foster good relationships between pupils with and without protected characteristics, such as disabilities.
- **Children and Families Act 2014:** Schools must ensure children with SEN can engage in activities alongside their peers.
- **Children Act 1989:** Bullying that causes or is likely to cause significant harm should be treated as a child protection issue.



WHERE TO GET HELP

If you need more advice or support, these organisations can help:

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance**
- **Contact for Families with Disabled Children**
| 0808 808 3555
- **Mencap** | 0808 808 1111
- **National Autistic Society** | 0808 800 4104
- **Kidscape** | 020 7823 5430
- **Family Lives**

Need Further Support?

Contact Shropshire SENDIASS for independent advice and support:

