

## **Bullying**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance 'easy-read' definition of bullying is;  
'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which it is difficult to stop.'

Bullying is usually repeated over a long period of time & can hurt someone both physically & emotionally.

### **Bullying a child with an SEN**

Children with SEN and disabilities can experience negative attitudes and perceptions of difference including forms of discrimination which might involve bullying. Because of the complexity of some children's needs, it can be harder for them to learn or access education or build the same friendships and relationships than most children of the same age, leaving them vulnerable to isolation and social exclusion.

### **Children with an SEN may....**

- not recognise bullying behaviour or that they are being bullied.
- fail to realise that their own behaviour might be seen as inappropriate or provocative.
- be more isolated, not have many friends to support them
- have difficulty telling people about bullying or reporting it

### **Types of bullying**

- **Verbal abuse** – such as name calling, teasing & gossiping
- **Non-verbal abuse** – such as hand signs or text messages
- **Emotional abuse** – such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- **Exclusion** – such as ignoring or isolating someone so they feel left out
- **Undermining** – through constant criticism or spreading rumours
- **Physical assaults** – such as hitting or pushing
- **Control** – manipulating someone or messing around with, or taking away, their possessions
- **Prejudice & discrimination** – such as abusing people because of their race, sexuality or disability
- **Use of technology** - online or cyberbullying through social media, text message or over the phone by sending threatening, abusive or menacing messages or creating & sharing embarrassing videos & images.

## **What can you do if your child is being bullied?**

- Encourage your child to tell an appropriate person. This may be a friend, teacher, or other trusted adult.
- Talk to your child about it, keep a diary of what has happened and when
- Ask for a copy of the school's behaviour policy. This should be available on their website.
- If the bullying continues, talk to their school. This can be their teacher, SENCO or headteacher.
- Request a meeting to discuss your concerns and talk about how school are addressing the issues.

## **What should school be doing?**

- Listen to your concerns and make a written record
- Ensure all staff members working with your child are aware of the situation
- Monitor your child and any incidents which may occur
- Make time to talk to your child and ensure they have an opportunity to report any incidents
- Be aware and report any changes in behaviour or mood of a child. Try and understand reasons for this.
- Deal with the bullies in line with their behaviour policy. Continue to monitor if the bullying continues following any sanctions made.

## **Role of the SENCO**

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has a particular role to play in ensuring the well-being of children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

They should:

- Encourage staff training in disability equality and raise awareness of the disability equality duties
- Ensure learners with SEN and disabilities who are bullied receive support and help in preventing and dealing with it
- Monitor the impact of anti-bullying interventions on individual children and young people with SEN and disabilities
- Ensure children and young people with social and behavioural needs receive appropriate support to prevent bullying behaviour where needed.

School should also pay particular regard to the following:

### **Their behaviour policy**

Under Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying. This must be part of the school's behaviour policy and communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Act establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which maintained schools & academies must comply with in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation. They must foster good relations between pupils who have protected characteristics, such as disabilities, & those without them.

### **Inclusion for those with SEN**

Under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 schools must ensure that pupils with special educational needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.

### **Safeguarding**

Under the Children Act 1989 where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead.

### **Further information, advice & support**

**Anti-Bullying Alliance** <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

**Contact a Family** <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/> 0808 808355

**Mencap** <https://www.mencap.org.uk/> 0808 808 1111

**National Autistic Society** <http://www.autism.org.uk/> 0808 800 4104

**Kidscape** <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/> 08451 205 204

**Family Lives** <http://www.familylives.org.uk/>

### **Where can I get further information, advice or support?**

Contact the IASS team on:

**Phone:** 01743 280019 (Open 10am-4pm Monday—Friday)

**Web:** [www.cabshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cabshropshire.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire](https://www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire)

**Email:** [iass@cabshropshire.org.uk](mailto:iass@cabshropshire.org.uk)

**Address:** Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY