

How can I help my child to avoid 'cyber bullying'?

More and more children are using mobile phones or the internet to bully others by sending threatening or hurtful messages and photographs, and spreading rumours. This is illegal, and, like any serious form of bullying, we may advise parents to involve the police.

Be aware of your child's use of technology and try to monitor what they are sending and receiving. Try to keep up-to-date with the technology yourself.

Encourage your child to be very careful whom they give their contact details to.

If your child knows the sender of the bullying messages, and is at Eastwick Schools, contact the school staff as soon as possible, even if the messages happen outside of school hours. Save the messages!

What do I do if my child is the bully?

It often comes as a big surprise to parents/carers that their children could be a bully. It may be hard to spot, although they may come home with money, toys or things you have not bought for them.

There are many reasons why young people bully others. Sometimes it is because they are copying someone else, or being encouraged by others. Or it may be because they are going through a difficult time at home, or because they haven't learnt other ways of mixing with children at school.

Please:

- do not avoid the issue.
- talk with your child and explain why their behaviour is wrong.
- encourage them to empathise with other people.
- make an appointment to speak to someone at school.
- work with the school staff to resolve the issues.

Are there further resources I can access?

Useful websites include:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/bullying

www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully

www.childline.org.uk

This leaflet has been designed to help parents identify and address bullying. Bullying is rare at Eastwick Schools but if it does happen, we take it very seriously and deal with it immediately. We know that to embed a culture which does not tolerate bullying, we must ensure we work in partnership with children and parents. Please do not hesitate to contact school staff if you would like to discuss the content of this leaflet further.



What do we do at Eastwick Schools to create a culture of anti-bullying?

Through our Values Curriculum, we spend time each week teaching the children how they can live by the values taught at both home and school. Each month we focus on a school value, such as: respect; happiness; thoughtfulness; honesty and trust. The value is a focus of our weekly assemblies, 'Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education' lessons and circle times. During our teaching, we focus on how to live by these values. We discuss the barriers that might prevent us living by these values and how we can overcome these. It is through this weekly teaching that we discuss the various forms of unkindness and how this can lead to bullying. We define bullying with the children, explore the different forms of bullying, discuss how to spot bullying and what to do if you or another child is being bullied.

Our teachers and teaching assistants are trained in spotting the signs of bullying and know the steps to take if they believe a child is being bullied. We have Emotional Learning Support Assistants in both schools who are able to lead specific support group work for those who are experiencing friendship issues including bullying. Furthermore, our year 6 prefects are taking an active role in working with Miss Parker to ensure the values taught are implemented and they are successfully developing new ideas such as 'worry boxes' so that every child has a way of communicating their concerns.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone is hurtful to others on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct or indirect; for example:

- Physical - hitting, pushing, gestures, taking belongings, unwanted physical contact
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, racist taunts, threats
- Non verbal/indirect - ignoring someone, glaring, isolating a person, graffiti, rumour spreading, sending unwanted text messages or emails, inappropriate use of the internet

Children can often get involved in these activities from time to time as part of growing up and peer pressure. As long as these incidents are confined to one off problems then, unpleasant as they are, it is not bullying and to refer to them as such would detract from genuine cases.

If, however, these acts are carried out over a period of time and continuously, affecting the emotional well-being of a child then we must step in and support the child immediately.

How do we spot bullying?

If your child is being bullied they may tell you about it, or they may:

- Complain of being unwell
- Make excuses to avoid school
- Avoid certain children or activities e.g. changing the clubs they attend
- Change their behaviour, e.g. tantrums, bedwetting, moodiness, bullying younger sibling or friend, become isolated
- Be unwilling to talk about their day
- Come home with cuts, bruises, torn clothes or damaged belongings
- Attempt to change their appearance e.g. refuse to wear glasses
- Take things from home to give to other children
- Change their eating or sleeping habits

There could be reasons in school for the increased anxiety like an assembly coming up, a school trip or a change in routine. It is important to rule them out first and make school staff aware of your child's behaviour.

What should I do if I think my child is being bullied?

Remember we will be as concerned as you and your child are and we will wish to resolve this situation in partnership with you both.

1. Calmly talk to your child about it, and make a note of what your child says has happened, who was involved, and how often incidents have occurred. Listen to your child, and value their feelings and worries.
2. Talk to your child's class teacher as soon as possible and ensure you understand our anti bullying policy.
3. Keep a record of what is suggested by school staff. Take things one step at a time, and arrange to talk again. Give school staff time to investigate and deal with the situation in the way they feel is most appropriate.
4. Discuss with school staff the support which will be given to your child e.g. buddy programme, access to supporting adult at any time of the day, support group on anti bullying strategies.
5. If you are unhappy with the teacher's response/actions or if the bullying continues, contact Miss Parker or Mrs O'Brien. As a final resort, you may make a complaint to the governing body. However, you must go through each stage of the school's complaints procedure first (a copy of this procedure will be available on request from the school).

What if my child witnesses bullying?

Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult at school. If your child is not confident, please offer them your support to report it. Please don't do nothing!

What will we do?

School staff will begin by investigating the situation thoroughly. They will then decide on an appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Supporting the victim
- Working with the bully to change their behaviour
- Speaking to the parents of all parties
- Deciding appropriate disciplinary response in proportion to the individual circumstances and incidents
- Encouraging empathy, genuine apology and reconciliation
- Monitoring future behaviour of individuals
- Whole school assemblies or class activities
- Involving other agencies (as appropriate)