

Anti-Bullying Week 2021



Every year, schools across Britain support Anti-Bullying Week, an event which started in 2004. The aim of the week is to raise awareness about bullying, the effect it has on people and to highlight ways of preventing it from happening. This year's event is from Monday 15th to Friday 19th November 2021.

In 2021, the theme is 'One Kind Word', which reminds us of the importance of being a kind person and using kindness to promote hope and positivity. The COVID-19 pandemic left many people isolated and scared, so the theme this year is a powerful way of promoting kindness as a way of stopping hurtful behaviour and working together for a positive future.



Types of Bullying

In order to challenge bullying, it is important to understand the main types, so that we may be vigilant.

Bullying which involves intentionally hurting (such as pushing, pinching, hitting or kicking someone) is called **physical bullying**. Often, there are marks or bruises that can be seen. Deliberately taking or breaking someone's possessions can also be called physical bullying.

Verbal bullying, although it doesn't leave any physical marks, can affect us mentally for a long time. Furthermore, the fact it doesn't leave visible injuries means that it is harder for others to identify. It involves hurtful comments, such as calling people names, teasing them or making threats. Name-calling is one of the most common ways that people are bullied.

Bullying by excluding someone from a game or a conversation, telling others to leave them out, or talking behind someone's back (in real life or by sending messages about them) is known as **social bullying**. It can also include doing something that embarrasses someone in front of their friends or family, such as taking photos without someone's permission.

In addition to the above types, there is also **cyber-bullying** which involves the use of online media to engage in verbal or social bullying. Cyber-bullying is particularly worrying because the person bullying cannot see the harm that it is causing the victim.

What Is Bullying?

Everyone has times when they fall out with friends or family, times when they say something they don't mean or times when they don't play nicely. Usually, these occasions are unusual or a 'one-off'. Even though this behaviour can be hurtful, unkind and upsetting to others, if it is not intentional and not repeated then it is not bullying.

Bullying is repetitive, deliberately hurtful behaviour that involves a power imbalance. This means that the person who is bullying thinks they have more power than the person being bullied (the victim). For example, they may believe they are stronger, faster or more intelligent than their victim. Bullying is the behaviour that makes the victim's life difficult and miserable. It is also possible that the bullies themselves are unhappy. It is surprisingly common for a person bullying to have been bullied themselves.



What Effects Does Bullying Have?

Bullying can happen to anyone, anywhere and at any time of their life. Bullying can make someone's life very difficult. It may not only have an effect on the victim's physical health, but on their mental health, too. If someone is being bullied at school, their behaviour may change. For example, they may play truant and make excuses to not attend school. At school, they may appear quiet and withdrawn. Being bullied makes people feel miserable, upset and scared. Furthermore, it can make concentrating on schoolwork very difficult. Research has also shown that being bullied has a long-term impact, for many years into the future.



Getting Help

It is crucial not to keep bullying to yourself. If you are being bullied, or you know someone else is being bullied, you must tell an adult whom you trust. This could be someone at home or at school or through a website such as Childline. You should never be told to ignore it or to change who you are. Bullying is never acceptable. However, you must never try to solve it alone. Somebody can always help.