

Bullying. Not a normal part of growing up.

Advice for adults

If a child or young person tells you they (or someone they know) is affected by bullying, they **need your help**. Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone hurts or upsets someone else on purpose, usually more than once. Bullying can happen face-to-face, online or on mobile phones. It can be done in front of other people or when no one else is around. Bullying involves a power imbalance based on things like physical size, age, gender or social status. Bullying can be:

- physical – eg hitting or taking / damaging someone's property
- verbal – saying, writing or posting nasty things, name calling, threats
- social – spreading rumours, sharing offensive pictures or videos, excluding someone from a group.

What if my child is being bullied?

- Listen to what they are saying and believe them.
- Thank them for telling you.
- Reassure them that it isn't their fault.
- Reassure them that you won't do anything without talking to them first.
- Talk to your child's school or kura and find out what they do to help.
- Agree on a plan for your child, such as avoiding the bullying children and making new friends.
- Support your child's activities and friendships.
- Regularly check in with your child to see how they are doing.

How would I know if my child is involved in bullying?

Most bullying happens when adults aren't around. Look for signs like:

- increased anxiety about school or kura
- not wanting to join in certain activities
- bruises that they don't want to explain
- looking unhappy with low self-esteem or self-confidence
- saying things like "*nobody likes me*", "*I haven't got any friends*" or "*I want to get back at someone*"
- describing others negatively like "*they're stupid*" or *they "deserve" bad things to happen to them*
- being defiant and getting into trouble for fighting at school
- getting frustrated when they don't get their own way
- being unconcerned when others have bad things happen to them.

What else can I do if my child continues to be bullied?

If you're not happy about the way the school or kura is handling the bullying, you can:

- make a written complaint to your school's Board of Trustees (BOT)
- ask to attend the BOT meeting at which your complaint will be addressed
- speak at that BOT meeting, if you get permission from the chairperson.

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If you're still unhappy with how the bullying behaviour is being dealt with by the school, you can take your complaint to:

- your local Ministry of Education office
- your local police station
- the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

If you take your complaint to your local police station they will follow a process that includes:

- assessing how serious the bullying is, the evidence and the circumstances
- providing advice on preventing further bullying and keeping your child safe
- investigating and deciding whether to warn or charge the person doing the bullying.

What if the bullying is happening online?

- Save bullying messages and images. This is evidence you might need if you report the bullying to the school or police.
- If the cyberbullying involves physical threats, and you're worried about your child's safety, contact the police immediately.
- For most social networking sites and all mobile phone providers, bullying is a breach of their terms of use. You can lodge a complaint with the social networking site or mobile phone provider. The bully may get a warning or be excluded from the site, or mobile access taken away.

Prevent cyberbullying by reminding your child regularly to:

- never give out their phone number to people they don't know
- only accept friend requests from people they know and trust
- never assume the person online is who they say they are
- ignore messages from an unknown number
- ignore messages that make them feel uncomfortable (often those who bully are just looking for a reaction)
- use privacy functions on Apps to block or prevent receiving nasty messages.

What if my child is involved in bullying others?

- Find out what is going on for them.
- Be clear about what acceptable behaviour is.
- Support them in apologising and making amends to the people they have hurt.
- Talk about how they can get on with other children without bullying them.
- Praise them when they play co-operatively with others.
- Explain to your child that they should always try to help a child who is being bullied because if they don't they are accepting that bullying is okay.
- Talk to your child's school or kura and find out what they do to help children who bully others.

For more information:

Education.govt.nz – for parents section:
parents.education.govt.nz

Netsafe: (0508 638 723) www.netsafe.org.nz

Youthline: Call 0800 376633 or
Free TXT 234 for support with bullying