

Help with Bullying

Information and Advice for Parents and Carers

This leaflet aims to support parents and carers to resolve bullying issues if they arise and has been written by the Transition Support Team in partnership with the Parent and Carer Council to support children and families with challenges around bullying.

We all want children and young people to be safe and happy. Tower Hamlets schools work hard to prevent and respond to bullying, but bullying can occur and children and young people often need the support of adults to resolve it.

What is bullying?

- Bullying can be defined as continuous behaviour which is done with the sole purpose to hurt someone emotionally and/or physically
- Bullying is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as physical appearance or disability
- When we think of bullying, we may believe it happens in class, corridors, toilets and the lunch hall, however bullying is not limited to just the school building. It can happen anywhere such as on the way to or from school as well as via text messages, social media and gaming sites

What does bullying look like?

Bullying can have many variations including:

- Physical assault
- Social exclusion
- Spreading rumours
- Threatening behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Name calling
- Cyber/online bullying



Children are most often bullied by other children but can also be bullied by adults.

How to spot if your child is being bullied?

Unfortunately, due to fear or embarrassment some children/young people are not able to verbalise that they are being bullied. Any unexplained change in mood or behaviour could be as a result of bullying. Try to find out what is wrong, support your child and look out for the signs below:

- Unexplainable bruises/injuries
- Broken or missing possessions
- Panic/anxiety attacks
- Bed wetting
- Complaining of headaches/stomach aches
- Refusal to go to school
- Behaviour changes – becoming withdrawn, quiet, aggressive
- Changes in sleeping pattern
- Changes in school performance

Cyberbullying

If your child is being bullied through social media, games, or websites it can feel hard to handle or escape from. You may not be familiar with the sites they are using or games they are playing and may not know what to do.



Look out for the signs. If your child is anxious or upset after being online this may be a sign they are being cyberbullied



Talk to them about what cyberbullying is (people saying things that upset them) and encourage your child not to retaliate or say hurtful things back - this may mean your child taking a short online break



Stay calm - try not to get angry if your child has posted or shared something that has led to the bullying. We all make mistakes, and this is a chance to talk about how important it is to think carefully before sharing

If the cyberbullies are children from your child's school, then it's important to keep a record of events and share when you contact the school.

Report it. Most platforms have ways that you can report bullying behaviour. For advice and tips on reporting bullying and harmful behaviour online you can visit:

www.internetmatters.org or
www.childnet.com

How to talk to your child about bullying?

- Listen to your child, it's important your child feels they have a voice
- Make discussions about bullying and healthy friendships a regular part of your family talks
- Remind your child that bullying is something that can happen to anyone and it is really important to tell someone if anyone is being bullied
- Ask your child about their day at school
- For younger children or children with disabilities you can use toys, puppets, happy and sad faces etc to encourage discussion
- Take care not to let any anxiety you feel add to your child's problems by making them more anxious. Most children have a good time at school, they can deal with difficulties when they arise and have positive school experiences

Your child is listening and watching your actions, so try and stay positive even if you encounter setbacks. Think about your conversations, who you speak to - some conversations can be unhelpful, and your child does not need to hear them.

What if your child is bullying others?

Children bully for many reasons. It is important to be calm and to help your child to see the hurt they have caused. Ask them to tell you about what is happening and remind them bullying is not ok.

- Suggest positive ways they can make friends and keep friends without hurting other people
- Praise your child when they are kind, non-violent and responsible
- Work with the school if this is an ongoing issue
- Make sure your child isn't witnessing aggressive behaviour at home

How do I talk with the school if my child is being bullied?

- By law, all state schools must have policies in place to prevent all forms of bullying, they set out what the school will do in partnership with you and your child to address the situation
- Read the school's anti-bullying, behaviour, complaints and safeguarding/child protection policies. Find them on the school website or school office
- Report the bullying to the school
- Try to stay calm and polite and recognise what the school is doing well
- Listen to what the school is saying
- Make a note of what has been agreed and set a date to follow-up and review the situation
- If you feel that the bullying has not been dealt with effectively, arrange to meet with a senior leader or the head teacher and agree how you can all work together to address the bullying. Record any actions and timescale in writing
- If you are still concerned the bullying has not been managed effectively, write to the school Chair of Governors to explain the situation and obtain further help

Remember that this may be the first time that the school has heard about the bullying. Recognise that some bullying situations are complex and can take time to resolve. You may need to give them time to investigate – the school should record the incident and make arrangements to support your child during the investigation.

Do not escalate the problem by publicly posting your concerns on social media, discussing in the playground or confronting children or family members,

If following the complaints procedure does not work, the Department for Education can review complaints about local authority schools and the Education Funding Agency about Academies.

www.gov.uk/complain-about-school

School absence

You have a legal duty to send your child to school and could be fined or prosecuted if you fail to do so. However, if the bullying is making your child too anxious to attend school – contact the school immediately and explain the situation and ways you can work together to find resolutions.

Top Tips



Record what is going on

Make a note of what has happened where, with who, and for how long, including screen shots of online abuse - keep a diary of events



Report it immediately

Agree with your child who is the best person to approach and what you need them to do e.g. school, online platforms. The focus should

be on making sure the bullying behaviour stops - recognise that there will be times when you will need to go against your child's wishes and contact the school



Consider who else can support your child

This may be their friends or teachers they like and trust. Encourage them to take part in activities that make

them feel good about themselves and to have friendships outside of school

Safety first

If your child is at risk of harm, do not send them into a situation where they are not safe. Contact Tower Hamlets Children's Services team and the police to report the situation – contact details can be found at the back of this leaflet.

In very serious cases of bullying, you may want to get professional help such as counselling. Speak to your GP, school or Early Help Hub who will be able to refer you to the right specialist support.

Services and support

Remember that your first point of contact is your child's school, however, these organisations can provide additional support.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Tower Hamlets Support		
Tower Hamlets Transition Service	Bullying advice and support to help you communicate with school Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays) 9am-5pm	T: 020 7364 6489 E: transitions@towerhamlets.gov.uk W: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/TransitionSupportTeam
Tower Hamlets Children's' Services Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Contact to report a safeguarding concern or think a child is at risk	T: 020 7364 5006 option 3 Extensions: 5606/5601/5358/7796 E: Mash@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Tower Hamlets Police Community Safety Team	Investigates hate crimes in the borough. This includes racist crime, domestic violence, homophobic crime and hate mail	T: 020 7275 4757 In an emergency you must dial 999 or visit your local police station
Tower Hamlets Early Help Hub	Point of contact for families and young people who would like some extra support to deal with a difficult situation Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays) 9am-5pm	T: 020 7364 5006 option 3 If you feel that a child or young person needs more urgent help or is at risk of harm, please contact the Child Protection Advice Line on 020 7364 5006
Family Information Service	Provides information and advice on services for children, young people (birth – 25 years old with SEND), and parents/carers, including childcare, holiday activities, parenting, leisure and much more Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays) 9am-5pm	T: 020 7364 6495 You can also access information online at: www.localoffertowerhamlets.co.uk

NAME	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
National Support		
Anti-bullying Alliance	Bullying advice, information and support	W: https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Childline	Confidential helpline for children and young people. Advice and support by phone and online, 24 hours a day	T: 0800 1111 (free) W: www.childline.org.uk
Family Lives	The www.bullying.co.uk website has information for parents, young people and professionals concerned about bullying	T: 0808 800 2222 W: www.familylives.org.uk www.bullying.co.uk/bullying-at-school
National Society for the Protection of Children (NSPCC)	Leading children's charity, preventing abuse and helping those affected to recover. Tips for all stages of a child's life, as well as advice on how to deal with difficult situations	T: 0808 800 5000 Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends E: help@nspcc.org.uk W: www.nspcc.org.uk
Thinkuknow	The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) online safety site has advice and tips for children, adults and professionals	W: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
YoungMinds Parents' Helpline	Free confidential online and telephone support and advice for adults worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of young people up to the age of 25	T: 0808 802 5544 Monday - Friday 9.30am-4pm E: parents@youngminds.org.uk W: www.youngminds.org.uk
National Victim Support Scheme	For emotional support please contact the National Victim Support Line	T: 0845 3030 900 or free phone 0808 168 9111 Deaf and hard of hearing victims can contact us using Text Relay 18001 0845 30 30 900
Cyberbullying	For advice and tips on reporting bullying and harmful behaviour online	www.internetmatters.org www.childnet.com

This leaflet has been produced by Tower Hamlets Transition Support Team – part of the Parent and Family Support Service.

The Parent and Family Support Service work with schools, settings and community partners to offer a range of services. They inform, empower and support parents and carers of children birth – 19 years, 25 years for young people with disabilities. For more information on all of the services available:

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/parentfamilysupport