

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when someone intimidates or causes harm to another person on purpose. The victims of bullying can be verbally, physically or emotionally assaulted and are often threatened and made to feel frightened. Bullying should not be viewed as an unfortunate but unavoidable part of school life. No child deserves to be bullied - it's unacceptable behaviour and can have a devastating effect on the victim. Bullying in school can include:

- verbal harassment - face to face, by phone, text or via the Internet
- hitting, hair-pulling and kicking, teasing and name-calling, spreading rumours
- damaging possessions, frightening and intimidation
- exclusion from groups.

SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

- Unwillingness to go to school
- feeling unwell, often with a headache
- irritability
- anxiety
- aggression towards you or others in your family
- bedwetting
- waking in the night
- missing or damaged belongings

IS BULLYING ILLEGAL?

Bullying is NOT illegal within the United Kingdom, however some forms of bullying are illegal and should be reported to the Police. These include:

- Violence or assault
- Theft
- Repeated harassment or intimidation
- Hate crimes

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you suspect your child is being bullied, don't ignore it. Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher as soon as possible.

Useful tips for the meeting:

- Decide what you want to say and what you'd like to achieve from the meeting before you go.
- Try to stay calm even though you may feel angry and emotional.
- Don't blame the teacher - he or she may be unaware of the bullying.
- Give specific examples of how your child is being bullied.
- Ask what the school's anti-bullying policy is.
- Discuss what action the teacher will take.
- Arrange to meet again within two weeks to discuss progress.
- If you're unhappy with the way your child's teacher deals with the situation - either at the meeting or after the school has taken action - make an appointment to see the head teacher and go through the same process described above.