



scouts.org.uk/bullying

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT BULLYING.

The Scouting Guide to Taking Action



SCOUTING HAS THE POWER TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH BULLYING IS NOT ACCEPTABLE...

This guide has been written to help you to reduce the chances of bullying happening, and to help young people who may be being bullied.

The Scout Association has an Anti- Bullying Policy that states: 'It is the responsibility of all adults in Scouting to help develop a caring and supportive atmosphere, where bullying in any form is unacceptable.'

This applies to everyone within Scouting – adults and young people.

In Scouting we create positive and respect environments where we value and celebrate our differences. This makes it difficult for bullying to occur. However, at some time we will all have experienced bullying, either as a target or an observer. That's why it's important that all adults and young people understand the role they play in addressing and preventing bullying.

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WHAT IS BULLYING?

Young people say that bullying is their biggest concern

Bullying is found in all walks of life, and can happen anywhere, to anyone. Some may say 'it's just part of growing up', but many young people feel powerless to stop bullying and may carry its effects long into their adult lives.

Bullying can take many different forms, some less obvious than others.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is usually repeated over a period of time.

Bullying is not the same as disputes and squabbles between friends – although this may turn into bullying, and should be addressed.

Bullying behaviour deliberately causes hurt, is repetitive and involves an imbalance of power. In other words the person on the receiving end feels like they can't defend themselves.

Bullying can be:

Physical: Threatening or causing injury to a person or property

Verbal: Teasing, insulting, ridiculing, humiliating or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments to someone

Social: Excluding others from a group, spreading gossip or rumours about them, rejecting or isolating them, or making them feel inferior

Cyber: using digital media to purposefully harm someone, like spreading rumours and hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, mobile phones, social media websites and text messaging.

Young people experience bullying for a variety of reasons; where they live, their sexuality, gender, disability, the colour of their skin, what clothes they wear or what team they support. Often, young people have no idea why they are being bullied.

It's every adult's responsibility to ensure that young people live, learn and play in an environment where bullying behaviour does not take place. Young people say they want adults to help them when bullying takes place, but often adults find it difficult to establish whether bullying is taking place or know what to do.



FOR NEARLY 20% OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CALL CHILDLINE ABOUT BULLYING, THE BULLY IS A FORMER FRIEND.



UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

Bullying hurts. It can make people feel that it's somehow their fault or that there is something wrong with them. It can have a devastating effect on young people's self-esteem and destroy their confidence and concentration. They may become more withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk. It can leave young people feeling lonely, isolated and very unhappy.

Bullying has an effect on everyone, not just those directly involved. Some feel they can only stand on the sidelines and do nothing because if they intervene they run the risk of being turned on themselves. This makes them feel helpless and guilty.

BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

We need to be aware of young people and adults displaying bullying behaviours and attitudes that impact on other young people in a negative way.

For example, using their physical presence to intimidate, influence or impress others or a tendency to relate to others in a negative way, like persistently making negative comments.

It is important to challenge these behaviours and attitudes, both directly (through conversations with the young people in question) and indirectly (through practice and the content of programmes).

HOW DO I RECOGNISE THE SIGNS?

Because it often happens away from others, bullying is not always easy to detect. But you can watch for signs that someone may be being bullied. For example, the Member who:

- hesitates to come to meetings or join in activities
- asks to change Groups, Patrols, etc.
- is the last one to get picked for a team for no apparent reason, or gets picked on when people think your back is turned
- is often the target of jokes
- is reluctant to go to certain places or work with certain individuals
- has clothing or personal possessions go missing
- has bruising or some other injury
- keeps 'losing' their subs or is short of pocket money
- is quiet and nervous, withdraws from everybody else and becomes quiet and shy (especially in the case of people who are usually loud and noisy)
- refuses to talk about the problem
- is usually quiet but becomes suddenly prone to lashing out at people, both verbally and physically.

REMEMBER THAT ADULTS CAN BE BOTH THE VICTIMS OF BULLYING OR THE BULLY.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Creating a positive culture

Help to create a respectful and friendly environment in your section or Group where bullying isn't acceptable.

Respectful environment: Help to develop a friendly and inclusive environment where young people respect one another. This will allow everyone to work together through programmes and activities and at the same time prevent bullying from taking place.

Be a role model: Young people often learn by example, so make sure that you act as a role model and display friendly, respectful and positive behaviours, that reflect Scouting values. Talk to young people and, most importantly, listen to them and show them respect, so they will respect others.

Build positive relationships: Building positive relationships based on respect and embracing difference is essential to prevent bullying. Teaching young people to negotiate, socialise appropriately and to find non-bullying strategies to deal with conflict will create an environment where bullying is less likely to be accepted.

Programme activities: It's important that anti-bullying is talked about with young people. This can be done through activities built into the programme, especially during Anti-bullying week, which happens every November in UK.

You can get programme materials from Programmes online, or you could use some of the resources available from beatbullying.org

Putting it into practice

Day to day practices should reflect the message that bullying is never acceptable and be continuously reinforced in all you do.

Communication: Make all adult volunteers aware of the Anti-bullying policy as part of their induction, as well as young people and their parents and carers. Leaders meetings are great to discuss any worries that adults might have.

Observe: Work on your observational and listening skills so that you can pick up on any subtle signs of bullying. Look out for any early changes in behaviour that a possible victim may be displaying.

Environmental factors: Consult young people on spaces where they do not feel safe and rearrange equipment or supervision patterns to eliminate these. Managing the environment can help reduce bullying. Provide quiet spaces where young people can be guaranteed time to themselves or spaces to act as social havens. In a noisy environment can overwhelm some young people with special needs, so it is helpful to provide chill out zones.

Act: If you're concerned about bullying in your section, make sure you tell the other Leaders. You must intervene, monitor and record any bullying situations.



'I DON'T WANT TO TELL MY MUM AND DAD - IT WOULD UPSET THEM TOO MUCH.' SUNITA, 16

CREATING YOUR OWN ANTI-BULLYING CODE

Anti-bullying codes are a great way for young people to focus on how they interact with each other and what they will do if they experience bullying.

All Groups and Sections should have a clear policy or code for dealing with bullying and for helping those who have been bullied.

Involve young people in anti-bullying work, as this is far more likely to succeed than if ideas are imposed on them.

Ask young people what they feel constitutes bullying - you can relate bullying to the Promise and Law. Discussions about what is and is not bullying can help form the basis for the Anti-Bullying Code.

Anti-bullying codes should always be created in partnership with the young people, but that doesn't stop the Leaders signing up to it too.

These will differ depending on the ages involved but may include statements such as:

"We will respect each other and our differences"

"When we see someone being bullied we will try to help"

Young people often have the best approaches to solving problems within their peer groups, and if young people create them, they will become more responsible and more aware of other people's needs.

There are normally five main goals for an Anti-bullying code:

- **To improve young people's self confidence**
- **To promote good behaviour in the Group or section**
- **To improve the Group environment and make it a place where bullying is less likely to happen**
- **To improve everyone's awareness of bullying and its consequences**
- **To make sure everyone is aware of the action that may be taken if bullying takes place.**

Make sure they are seen

Anti-bullying codes should be prominently displayed for all to see. Regularly review the code with the youth people, and make sure that new members get a chance to see it and add to it.

Don't forget to make the code known to parents and carers

Use the code

If bullying behaviour occurs or relationships are being negative the behaviour can be checked by reminding young people of the code they made.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Your response when dealing with young people who are involved in bullying incidents is vitally important. You will need to make the victim safe and stop the bullying, but also work with the bully to change their behaviour. The response should be consistent, regardless of whom the young person approaches.

Young people often don't report bullying because they fear adults will take over and act without their permission. Therefore, make sure you discuss what you are going to do with the young person first and get their agreement.

Support the young person being bullied

Finding an adult they can trust and talk to can help in many ways. If a young person tells you that they are being bullied, the first and most important step is to listen. A sympathetic adult can give support just by listening to them discuss their feelings.

Talk to the young person. Establish what has happened and agree a way to address the issue. They may not be ready to do anything other than talk about the bullying, or they may have some very clear ideas and want to talk them through to try to sort them out.

Work with the bullies

If the bullying is in Scouting, work with the bullying young person to help them understand their behaviour, and its effects on others. Many people who bully others have been victims at some point themselves, and may still be one. The overall goal is to ensure the bullying stops and the bully's behaviour changes. Remember that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable and not the person. They may need some help in finding ways to recognised and manage their emotions, or identifying triggers.

A good start could be the Anti-Bullying Code. Use this to establish what acceptable behaviour is and is not. Help the young person understand the consequences and effects of bullying. Get their agreement to put the Code into practice at all times. Deal firmly and fairly with any breaches of the Code.

Monitor and record

Bullies may still bully someone else, or bully more secretly so that they do not get caught. Consider whether interventions have secured lasting change and check from time to time.

- Monitor the situation
- Record any incidents and actions
- Report back to victim
- Follow up discreetly with victim



INVOLVING PARENTS...

We should always aim to work in partnership with parents. If a young person is being bullied parents should be made aware of the situation. Talk to the young person and their parents about any proposed actions. Where appropriate, suggest other sources of advice and help.

Where a young person is responsible for bullying others, think about whether it would be appropriate to talk to the parents to help resolve the situation.

You might want to think about talking to parents alone first to ensure you give the same messages to the young person about their behaviour. It may be that their parents have encouraged their behaviour e.g. told them to stand up for themselves. If the parents disagree with you, this will give mixed messages to the bully and is more likely to make the situation worse.

Seek parents' help and support in getting the young person's commitment to change their behaviour.

Tip: Programme activities are to help prevent bullying and not resolve specific bullying instances - specific bullying needs to be addressed with the individuals concerned.

Responding to serious or persistent bullying

Sometimes bullying may involve a serious incident, such as a serious physical or sexual assault. Bullying might persist despite attempts to intervene. In this kind of situation, a different response may be required, but the goals of the intervention remain the same: to make the victim safe and to stop the bullying behaviour.

At this point you should treat it as a safeguarding concern and follow the Yellow Card reporting procedures.

**'IT TOOK ME
A LONG TIME
TO GET MY
CONFIDENCE
BACK - YEARS
REALLY. I
STILL THINK
ABOUT IT.'
DARREN, 26**



CYBER-BULLYING

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person.

Cyberbullying takes different forms, some of which are harder to detect or less obviously associated with bullying than others.

It can include:

Threats and intimidation: via comments in websites, social networking sites or message boards, emails, mobile phones.

Insults and remarks: sending inappropriate, or hurtful text messages, emails, instant messages or posting personal information or videos designed to hurt or embarrass someone else.

Public posts: includes photos, messages, or pages that don't get taken down, even after the person has been asked to do so. This might include things that the target has posted themselves.

Harassments or stalking: repeated and unwanted texting or messaging or online stalking which may be an extension of offline harassment.

Exclusion: online exclusion can be harder to detect, but include things like, not being friends with someone on a social networking site. It could also be young people arranging to meet and then changing plans at the last minute.

Identify thefts: Hacking into someone's system to copy files, steal information, harass or humiliate. They may set up fake identities or delete information or impersonate someone.

Manipulation: Putting pressure on someone to share private information or pushing for physical meetings.

In other words cyberbullying is anything that gets posted online and is deliberately intended to hurt.

Anytime, anywhere and anonymous

The impact of cyberbullying can be felt immediately and can be far reaching very fast. It can take place at any time and can intrude into places that might previously have been regarded as personal and safe. It's therefore harder to walk away. Cyberbullying also offers anonymity for the bully.

"It's just a joke!"

Some instances of cyberbullying can be unintentional. It can be the result of not thinking, for example something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient.

'IT WAS ONLY A BIT OF FUN REALLY. I DIDN'T MEAN FOR HIM TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.' JAY, 13

CYBERBULLYING HELP: ADVICE TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE

ALWAYS report any bullying, whether it is happening online or face-to-face. You can report bullying through social networking sites using their report buttons and safety centres. If you are being bullied at school, or in Scouting, you can talk to a teacher or trusted adult, like a Leader.

There are a few 'don'ts' to remember when dealing with bullying:

- Don't retaliate or sink to the level of the bullies
- Don't believe the things they are telling you
- Don't take your feelings out on others even if the bullying is making you feel unhappy or frustrated
- Don't ever think it's your fault. It isn't. There are many reasons why people bully, but it is never your fault.
- Don't be a bystander: if you see bullying, cyberbullying or abuse going on, report and get help

Speak out

There are lots of different ways to cope with bullying, but the important first step is to tell someone. You might not feel ready to talk to an adult, but you could speak to a friend. Or you could talk to someone your age who has trained to be a mentor at www.beatbullying.org.

What to do if you're being bullied online

- 1 - Tell an adult you trust
- 2 - Talk to someone your age (a friend or a mentor)
- 3 - Block the bullies
- 4 - Keep the evidence
- 5 - Report mean videos, pictures, comments or pages to the website you found them on.

Some final thoughts...

Adults in Scouting must never become party to bullying in any form. In fact, they must make sure everyone knows they will not tolerate any form of bullying.

Young people must feel confident that they can approach leaders with a complaint and that it will be dealt with.



WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

ChildLine

Young people can call free, at any time, for information and confidential advice about all problems, including bullying on **0800 1111**. www.childline.org.uk offers information, advice and true stories about bullying.

NSPCC

Adults who need advice and support can call the NSPCC helpline free on **0808 800 5000**.

Kidscape

Leaflets and booklets on bullying are available from www.kidscape.org.uk



scouts.org.uk/bullying

Beatbullying

Beatbullying works with children and young people across the UK to stop bullying. As well as training programmes, BeatBullying has a website where young people help each other. Young people can log on and talk to someone about their experiences. www.beatbullying.org

Thinkuknow

Thinkuknow has resources for young people, adults and parents about staying safe online. Most importantly, there's also a place which anyone can use to report if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Bullying UK (Part of Family Lives)

BullyingUK part of Family Lives have launched a new LiveOnline Support service for every member of the family to get advice direct, and support you with a wide range of bullying problems www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice
Helpline: 0808 800 2222

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County: Although in some parts of the British Isles Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands - and in one case Bailiwick - for ease of reading this publication simply refers to County/Countries. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent to County or Area. In Scotland, Scouting is organised into Districts and Regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some 'County' functions are the responsibility of Scottish Regions, whilst others lie with Scottish Districts. The focus of responsibility is outlined in Scottish variations from POR.