

Safe from bullying

Supporting your child

We want all children and young people in Brighton & Hove to feel safe and supported at school. Brighton & Hove schools work hard to prevent and respond to bullying, but bullying does occur and children and young people often need the support of adults to resolve it.



This leaflet aims to support parents and carers to work with schools to resolve bullying issues if they arise and has been devised by Brighton & Hove City Council's Children's Services in partnership with the Parent's Forum, and other statutory and Community and Voluntary Sector organisations.



Brighton & Hove
City Council

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by a person or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts others either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms, and includes cyber-bullying via social media or the internet.

Bullying can involve verbal taunts, name calling, physical injury, and damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability (including having special needs or learning difficulties), or because a child is in care, has caring responsibilities or mental health issues. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else, or for no reason at all. Children and young people report appearance as the number one reason they are bullied in Brighton & Hove.

The law requires schools to have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all bullying among pupils. Schools also must work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In Brighton & Hove all schools should record bullying and one off incidents of prejudice by type (including racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism and disablism). Parents and carers should inform the school if any form of bullying or prejudice is experienced by their child in school. Alternatively, parents and carers can contact the Community Safety Casework Team as described on pages 8 and 9. Hate crimes, antisocial behaviour and assault can also be reported to the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

How do I talk to my child about bullying?

- Make discussions about bullying 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.

How do I know if my child is being bullied?

Any unexplained change in mood or behaviour could be as a result of bullying or other issues at school. If this happens, try to find out what is wrong and support your child if there are any problems. You may want to contact the school to see if they are aware of any problems.

How do I talk to my child about their experience of being bullied?

It's natural to be angry and upset if you find your child is being bullied, but it's important to respond to your child calmly and quietly. If your child sees you get upset, they may feel anxious and not tell you everything that's happened.

- Praise them for telling you
- Keep a running log of incidents and take photographs of any injuries
- Tell them that what is happening is not okay and ask them what they would like to happen next
- Recognise that there will be times when you will need to go against your child's wishes and contact the school
- Remind your child that although this is a very difficult time and may get harder, it will get better and that you will support them.

How can I support my child in relation to cyber-bullying?

Many parents and carers are particularly concerned about cyber-bullying because of its public and far-reaching nature. It can also be a criminal offence. Remember that the problem is the bullying behaviour, not the internet, and so respond to the bullying as described in this leaflet. However, you may wish to ensure you have supported your child to be safe online by giving them the following messages:

- Never post anything they would not say to someone's face or would not be happy for you to see
- Never reply to abusive messages (but to log them and report them)
- Never give out their personal details
- Never reply to someone they do not know
- Stay in the public areas of chat rooms
- Block bullies
- Tell someone, including the school if they are being bullied online.

For more information about keeping your child safe online, visit the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre's www.thinkuknow.co.uk website.

What if my child has been bullying?

It's natural to be angry and or upset if you find your child is using bullying behaviour, but it's important to respond to your child calmly and supportively.

- Ask your child to tell you about it - remind them that even if someone has upset them, bullying or prejudice is never okay
- Praise your child when they are kind, non-violent and responsible

- Be critical of the behaviour, but not your child
- Talk with them about the harm bullying can do
- Support them to think of ways to make amends
- Work with the school if this is an ongoing issue and consider sanctions at home if the behaviour continues
- Make sure your child isn't witnessing aggressive behaviour at home.

What if my child has witnessed bullying?

If your child witnesses bullying encourage them to talk to you about it, how it has left them feeling and what they could do next. It's important to equip children and young people with the ability to respond appropriately if they witness bullying. As well as helping the person being bullied, it can prevent your child feeling guilty or anxious if it happens to them. Here are some ways your child can respond to bullying:

- Avoid joining in or laughing - even if they don't feel brave enough to do something more active they can avoid joining in
- Walk away - if bullies don't have an audience, they may stop
- Tell the bully to stop if they feel safe in doing so
- Get an adult
- Use a mobile phone to call or text for help
- Request other bystanders to stand up too
- Support the victim or target during or after the event to get help.

What can parents and carers do to help bully-proof their children?

Any child can be bullied or be a bully, but the support parents and carers provide at home can help prevent some bullying or reduce its impact. For example:

- Encourage positive friendships
- Teach your children to express themselves clearly yet tactfully
- Support your child to feel good about themselves and to have respect for others
- Stress the importance of positive body language and looking confident
- Encourage them to learn how to negotiate and remind them that aggressive or violent responses are likely to make a situation worse
- Keep them safe online
- Seek support from the school or friends and family if you need it to support your child.

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

- Read the school anti-bullying policy, available from the school website or school office
- Report the bullying to the school in line with the policy or following advice from school reception. Bullying and prejudiced based incidents can also be reported to the Community Safety Casework Team who will provide support. See pages 8 and 9
- Discuss what is happening with the member of school staff. The school should set out what they will do in partnership with you and your child to address any conflict between pupils. You may want to write down what has been agreed and set a date to follow-up on what has been done and the results. Expect the school to let you know what has happened

- If the issue has not been resolved within the agreed time or to your satisfaction, make an appointment with a senior member of staff
- Agree with the senior member of staff, on how you, your child and the school can work together to deal with the bullying. Set some action points which should be recorded by you or the school in writing
- If you still feel that the bullying has not been dealt with effectively, write to the school's Chair of Governors. They will aim to help you and the school sort things out.

Bullying or prejudice is an emotive issue. Think about what you are going to say, try to stay calm and polite and recognise what the school is doing well.

- Remember that this may be the first time that the school has heard about the bullying. You may need to give them time to investigate but the school should record the incident and make arrangements to support your child during the investigation
- Listen to what the school is saying and how your child could be contributing. Remember that your child may not have told you all the facts
- Recognise that the school also has responsibilities to the child who is using bullying behaviour – to support them to learn and change their behaviour
- Remember that school staff may not be able to tell you all the actions they propose to take
- Recognise that some bullying situations are complex and can take time to resolve
- Do not escalate the problem by publicly posting your concerns on Facebook, discussing in the playground or similar
- Get support by talking about your feelings with family and friends or by contacting one of the helplines listed at the end of this leaflet.

- If you have been through the steps above, and the bullying is not resolved and you are unhappy with the school's actions, follow the school's complaints policy which should be on the school website
- 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.

Reporting prejudice-based or hate incidents

In Brighton & Hove we recognise that one-off prejudice-based incidents cause hurt or harm to individuals, families and communities, even when they are unintended.

A prejudice based or hate incident is a: 'a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups.'

Schools should record all prejudice-based incidents, and parents and carers are encouraged to report any incidents experienced by their child in school to the school.

Hate incidents and anti-social behaviour can be reported directly to the city's Community Safety Casework Team. Vulnerability and risk are assessed for each incident, and the team will either directly support victims and address the behaviour of the perpetrators if the victims require this, or refer cases on to appropriate services to reduce harm and resolve issues.

You can email the team on communitysafety.casework@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk or call them on **01273 292735**. The number is staffed on weekdays between 9am and 5pm and has an answerphone out of office hours.

Hate crime, anti-social behaviour and assault can also be reported directly to the police by calling **101** or **999** in an emergency.

Support in Brighton & Hove

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

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

If you have a safeguarding concern or think a child is at risk call **01273 290400**

Allsorts Youth Project

Allsorts Youth Project supports young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure of their sexual orientation and/or gender. **www.allsortsyouth.org.uk 01273 721211**

AMAZE

A charity offering information, advice, guidance and support to parents and carers of children with special needs and disabilities in Brighton & Hove. **www.amazebrighton.org.uk 01273 772289**

Behaviour and Attendance Team, BHCC
01273 291956

BMEYPP

Project for Black, Asian, Arab and Mixed Heritage young people aged 11-25. **www.bmeypp.org.uk 01273 609298**

Community Safety Team

Service for the reporting of hate incidents anti-social behaviour and supporting those who have been targeted inside and outside school.

www.safeinthecity.info

email: **communitysafety.casework@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

01273 292735

Family Information Service

Provides information and advice about childcare and services for families.

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/fis

email: **familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

01273 293545

Friends, Families and Travellers

Offers advice and advocacy for individual Gypsies and Travellers, families and communities.

www.gypsy-traveller.org

01273 234777

MOSAIC

MOSAIC provides independent support for black and mixed-parentage families to combat racism and support the development of positive cultural and racial identity.

01273 234017

Safety Net

Local children's charity providing services and support to improve safety and well-being for children, young people and parents.

www.safety-net.org.uk, www.safetynetkids.org.uk

01273 411613

National support

Family Lives

The www.bullying.co.uk website has information for parents, young people and professionals concerned about bullying which includes information for certain groups such as if your child is disabled.

www.familylives.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk/bullying-at-school

Helpline: **0808 800 2222**

Thinkuknow

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) online safety site has advice and tips for children, adults and professionals.

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.

www.youngminds.org.uk

email: parents@youngminds.org.uk

0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday 9.30am - 4pm)

Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加劃, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese

ترجمة؟ لعلنا این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregokolwiek biura samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadricula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

This can also be made available in large print, Braille, or on CD or audio tape