

Dealing With Bullies



Your mom keeps giving you money for snacks, but you never get a chance to spend it. The kid who lives on the next block has threatened to beat you up if you don't give him your money.

Yesterday when you were getting dressed in the locker room, two other girls started to moo. Later they emailed you pictures of cows. Now you hear people making that sound wherever you go. You never want to go back to school again.

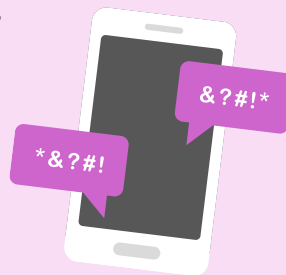
Has anything like this ever happened to you? Then you've been the target of bullying. And you're not alone. Studies show that as many as one out of four kids has been bullied at some time or other.

You don't have to let yourself be a target—and you don't have to stand by and watch bullying happen to someone you know. Here's what you need to know about bullying.

How to handle cyberbullying

Cyberbullying—bullying done online—has become common. Bullies now can spread rumors quickly through email, text messages or social media. But you're not powerless just because you aren't face-to-face with the bully. If you or someone you know is being cyberbullied:

- **Never respond.** If you write back to a cyberbully, it encourages the bully to keep the communication going.
- **Keep records.** Print out everything—any email you receive from the bully or anything you find posted about you. Write down the date and time you found it, too.
- **Go to the authorities.** Tell your parents if you receive a cruel or hurtful email or text message. If the cyberbullying doesn't stop, go to school officials or the police and show them what you have printed out.



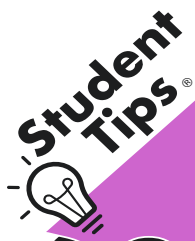
You aren't helpless

Some parents may tell their children to strike back at bullies. Usually, that creates more problems than it solves. But if you're being bullied, you *aren't* helpless. Here are some things you might try:

- **Tell a friend.** Ask your friend to help you—it's tougher to pick on a person who has someone there for support.
- **Walk away.** It's harder to bully someone who won't stand still to listen.
- **Chill out.** Bullies seem to target kids who respond to their taunts—kids who cry easily or who tend to fly off the handle. So try hard not to show any emotion. Practice by looking in a mirror if you have to. It's not fun to bully someone who doesn't seem to care.
- **Try not to be alone** in places where the bully picks on you. Sit with a friend on the bus or walk to school together.
- **Don't fight back.** Usually, bullies are bigger and stronger than you are. If you try to fight, you could make the situation worse. Or you could even get blamed for starting the fight.
- **Write it down.** Keep track of what happens—dates, times, places. Write down exactly what the bully says. When you are ready to tell an adult, you'll have proof. Remember—people matter more than things. If bullies are attacking you because they want your money, your sneakers, or your jacket, give up your property before you give up your life. A jacket can be replaced. *You* can't.

It's not your fault

A bully doesn't pick on you because of something *you* did. The bully is picking on you because of the way *he or she* feels. Some people bully others as a way of feeling popular, showing off or making themselves look tough. Others think that intimidation is the best way to handle problems. Often, they've been the targets of bullying themselves. So if someone is bullying you, don't think it's your fault.



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What is bullying, anyway?

“Bullying” is another name for harassment. Bullying can be physical—one or more students hurting another. More often, bullying is verbal and includes persistent threatening, teasing, ridicule or gossiping—in person or online.



Tell an adult

It's pretty tough to stop bullying by yourself—or even with the help of friends. So if you've tried some of the things on the list inside and the bullying hasn't stopped, it's time for you to tell an adult.

Nobody likes to admit that they're being bullied. And some kids think they're being “tattletales” if they tell an adult. That's not true. Kids have a right to be safe from attacks. And often a bully has more than one target—so if you don't tell, the bully may keep on harassing other people, too.

Start by telling your parents. Show them the things you've written down. Ask them to tell a teacher or your principal.

Schools can do things to stop kids from bullying—but they can't take action if they don't know what's happening. (And usually bullies are clever enough to do their bullying when no adults are around.)

Bullying doesn't have to be a fact of life. Adults don't want it to go on in school. So if you're being bullied—or if you know someone who is—don't wait. The sooner you act, the sooner the bullying will stop.

If you see someone being bullied

Have you ever seen someone being bullied? Here are some things you can do:

- **Remember** that it's not the victim's fault. So don't blame the person for getting bullied.
- **Don't let the person be alone.** Bullies tend to single out kids who are all by themselves. You and your friends can prevent bullying just by being there.
- **Tell an adult.** Report what you've seen.
- **Ask if your school** can start an anonymous way to tell adults what they've seen. Adults don't always know what's going on if kids don't tell them.



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