

Spotting the Signs of Bullying

A Guide for Parents

Bullying is at best unpleasant, at worst damaging, whenever it happens and for whatever reason. Having an open line of communication with your child about their concerns is always the best starting point in helping them, but often children don't speak up, usually for fear of retribution or humiliation. These are some of the most common signs that there may be a problem:

- Unexplained injuries, such as bruises or scratches.
- Lost or damaged clothing, bags, books, electronics or other belongings.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faked illnesses which coincide with school days.
- Changes in eating habits, for example skipping meals or refusing to eat.
- Difficulty sleeping, nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Poor performance at school, loss of interest in school or school work, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoiding social situations such as parties, football matches or dance classes.
- Feelings of helplessness or low self-esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviour such as attempting to run away from home, or self-harm.



If you suspect your child may be the victim of bullying, contact their school as soon as possible. Witnessing bullying incidents can also be very traumatic for your child, even if they are not the victim themselves. If your child reports having seen bullying going on, it is important that you contact their school.