So, What is Bullying?

Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn’t make you a better or stronger person, and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up. Bullying is behaviour that can make you feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. The following advice is for children who have felt like this (and for those who might have made others feel that way too).

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Being called names, being teased or made fun of
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you
- Receiving abusive text messages or emails

How do you know if it’s bullying?

Some people think it’s only bullying if it happens more than once, and the other person means to hurt you. A lot of bullying does happen over and over again, and the person doing it knows it’s having an effect, but this isn’t always the case.

Something only needs to happen once for you to feel worried or scared to go to school or other places you enjoy going to. Just because someone doesn’t realise how hurtful their behaviour is doesn’t mean it’s not bullying. What matters is how their behaviour makes you feel. If you are worried or scared you might need help and support to deal with things. The person making you feel this way may also need help to recognise how they are behaving.

At the same time, it’s important to remember that fall outs and disagreements are a normal part of life for most people; we can’t get on with everyone all the time and this isn’t always bullying.

People can get bullied just for being different – the colour of their skin, their accent, their beliefs, a disability or the clothes they wear. The truth is that everyone is different in their own way, but it can hurt because it’s as if you are being bullied just for being you. Remember – you have a right to be you! We want a diverse world where differences are embraced.

*Inside this booklet:*

- So what is bullying? 1
- How do you know it’s bullying? 1
- Do you think you might 2
- My rights 2
- What can I do? 2-3
- Childline 4
- Remember... 4

At Strathesk Primary School we believe it is good to be different. This is what makes us all special!
Do you think you might have bullied someone?

We have all done or said things we have later regretted.....

Consider these statements:

- Do you join in when others are being nasty to or about someone?
- Do you laugh at people or stories made up about them?
- Do you send or pass on hurtful messages or images of people?
- So you think it is okay to threaten or frighten people that you don’t like?

Have you ever made someone else feel scared, anxious, worried or left out?

All of these can be seen as bullying behaviour. Sometimes people don’t realise the impact their behaviour is having and sometimes they do, so try to be more aware of what you’re saying and doing and how it might be affecting others. Even if you’re just ‘having a laugh’ the other person might not see it that way – or it could be hurting them more than they’re letting on.

The consequences for bullying behaviour can be serious; you can be excluded from school, clubs and activities, it might affect how people think about you now and in the future, and you won’t learn the skills you need to make good relationships. You need to know what’s wrong with the way you’re behaving and get help to see how you should behave instead.

We think this message helps:

You don’t have to play with me, agree with me or even like me.. but you do have to respect me!

What about my rights?

With rights come responsibilities.

All children have rights, which are listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights are there to protect you and give you a voice. Bullying behaviour can take some of these rights away from you so it’s important you are familiar with what they are:

- You have the right to think what you want without stopping someone else from enjoying the same right
- You have the right to be safe but so does everyone else, so you also have the responsibility not to do something that might make someone else feel unsafe
- You have the right to relax and take part in leisure activities and you have a responsibility not to behave in a way that stops other people from doing this
- Adults have a responsibility to make sure you enjoy these rights at home, at school and in your community.

You can find out more at www.unicef.org.uk or www.sccyp.org.uk

What about my rights?

Respect Others, Respect Yourself, Respect Property

- You have the right to be safe but so does everyone else, so you also have the responsibility not to do something that might make someone else feel unsafe
- You have the right to relax and take part in leisure activities and you have a responsibility not to behave in a way that stops other people from doing this
- Adults have a responsibility to make sure you enjoy these rights at home, at school and in your community.

You could tell an adult –

In most cases this is good advice but maybe you are worried about bullying getting worse because you have told.

For some people that can be worse than the bullying itself, but remember that telling the right adult really can make a difference. Talk to someone you can trust. It might be a parent, teacher, brother or sister, friend, football coach or youth worker. It doesn’t matter who they are as long as you trust them to do the best for you.
**Don’t bottle things up -**

If you’re struggling it’s important not to bottle up your feelings. Even if you don’t want help to stop the bullying behaviour, you can still talk to a friend or someone else you trust about how you feel.

You might find it easier to tell a friend rather than an adult. A good friend will listen without judging or trying to fix the situation. If you do need adult help but find it difficult to approach someone, a friend can help by going with you or, passing the information on.

**Using ‘Cool Responses’ and ask them to stop**

Another good way to respond is to use your ‘Cool Responses’ and firmly say ‘stop it’ or ‘go away’. By standing up to anyone who is upsetting you it gives a very clear message that you will not tolerate this behaviour. It may also be that the person bullying you might not be aware of the way they are making you feel, and if you tell them it may be that they change the way they behave towards you. If you think this might make things worse then it’s best to explore another option.

**Ignore it/Walk Away/Pretend it doesn’t bother you**

Being able to walk away or act like it doesn’t bother you is a good coping mechanism; it can show people you’re confident and can deal with situations. But it’s not always easy to laugh off nasty comments or other types of bullying behaviour and pretend that you’re okay when you’re not.

If you can, try walking away, ignoring it or pretending it doesn’t bother you. But if it’s not an option then you need to think about trying something else.

**Use a witty/ clever comeback**

Some people are witty enough to respond to people who are bullying them with a clever comeback, but you have to be quite confident to do this; it’s not something that everyone will be able to do, and should you weigh up the situation and be prepared for the reaction you might get. No one wants to be embarrassed in front of other people so it might make them react more strongly/violently than they did before. Try to judge whether you might make things worse before taking this approach.

**Get your own back**

This is a common piece of advice but isn’t always helpful! Sometimes you might hear adults tell you to ‘get them back’ or ‘hit them back’. You have to remember if someone has hit you then this is assault, and if you hit someone back you could yourself be charged with assault.

But bullying behaviour doesn’t always involve hitting. If you’re being bullied online it can be easy to send back nasty comments or spread rumours about someone else on your MSN, Instagram, Twitter or Facebook page, but again this is risky. There are laws about cyberbullying and every online message or text can be traced. Despite what people think, responding to bullying with more bullying doesn’t make it go away.

So there’s lots of different options available to you if you’re being bullied and you might not know where to start! Whatever you decide, make sure it feels right for you. If it’s all a bit much and you’re not sure where to turn it might help to talk to someone in confidence.
Remember......

Bullying is never acceptable, it can make you feel frightened, hurt, threatened and anxious. Some of you will cope better with this than others. Some people will need to try different things before finding something that works – what works for one person might not work for you but you have choices. When you’re being bullied it can be difficult to know what to do or where to turn to make it stop.

All of the people in your life have a responsibility to make sure you’re safe.

ChildLine

When you’re having a hard time it can help to talk to someone about what’s happening. You can contact ChildLine about anything, no problem is too big or too small.

If you are feeling scared or out of control or just want to talk to someone, you can contact ChildLine.

When you contact ChildLine, either by calling 08001111 or for an online chat on www.childline.org.uk you will be connected to a counsellor who will listen to whatever problem you have – this will be someone you can trust, and they will never judge you or put you down.

You don’t need to give your name or any details about yourself if you don’t want to. They will help you think about needs to change in you life and who might support you to make these changes.