

If your child has bullied someone...

No one wants to hear that their child is a bully, but with 15% of young people admitting to bullying someone online, it's an issue some parents have to deal with. Most anti-bullying information focuses on what to do if your child is targeted by bullies – and rightly so – but your response will be just as crucial if your child has bullied someone else. Here are our top tips for dealing with a bullying incident.

- 1) Get the real story.** It's natural to assume your child is innocent, but try to stay open minded. You'll want to hear their side of the story, of course, but find out as much as you can about what happened before jumping to conclusions.
- 2) Cooperate and accept the consequences.** If your child's school is looking into a bullying accusation, try to cooperate. Schools take bullying very seriously and should investigate carefully. And if it does turn out your child has bullied someone, help them accept the consequences for their actions. They should learn that it's not acceptable – hopefully seeing how seriously bullying is taken will make them less likely to do it again.
- 3) Find out (and deal with) the reasons.** Most young people who admit to bullying someone online say they did it for social reasons. If this is the case, make sure your child knows friends shouldn't pressure you to behave badly. 12% also said they did it because they were unhappy or struggling, so consider the possibility that your child needs help to deal with other issues.
- 4) Consider the examples they see.** Try not to be too hard on yourself if your child is involved in bullying, but think about negative examples – from you or anyone else – that could have influenced their behaviour. Overhearing lots of jokes at someone else's expense, for example, could make some bullying behaviour seem more normal.
- 5) Remember their other qualities.** All young people make mistakes, and one incident (however upsetting) doesn't mean you've failed as a parent. Think about some of the things your child does well, and ask them to consider whether bullying is really part of who they want to be.