

Have you experienced bullying? You're not alone. Read the article to understand more about bullying and find out what you can do to stop it.

## Why do we need to take action against bullying?

Sadly, bullying is really common. In a study of young people in the UK aged 12–20, half of them said they had been bullied. About 1.5 million young people in the UK were bullied last year, and many of these were bullied every day. People who are bullied are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. They might lose interest in the activities they enjoy, avoid spending time with other people and not go to classes or school, which has a negative effect on their learning.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is not just physical, like hitting or kicking someone, or taking their things without permission. Bullying can also be with words – saying or writing things that are not nice. Another type of bullying is social – choosing not to include someone, embarrassing someone or telling other people not to be friends with them. Bullying can happen at school, on public transport, when you're walking home, online ... in fact, it can happen anywhere. Bullying involves an imbalance of power – one person (or a group of people) that is more powerful than another. Maybe this person has private information or is more popular, or maybe they are physically bigger and stronger.

## The roles kids play

Bullying usually involves more people than you think. There are the people who bully and those who are bullied. (It is better not to say 'the bully' and 'the victim' because that makes it sound like things can't change.) Sometimes other people help the bully or join in. Then there are the kids that support – they don't bully anyone directly, but they support the bullying by being an audience. They laugh or encourage the children who are bullying in other ways. This is why it's important for everyone to work together against bullying. Some children see what is happening and want to help, although they don't know how. Others may comfort and defend the person being bullied. To stop bullying we need everyone to be brave and take a stand.

## How to help

Does your school do anything to prevent bullying? Why don't you create a student anti-bullying group? This group can do many things. Let the head teacher know how well the school is doing with fighting bullying and give them advice. Choose an anti-bullying slogan for your school, make posters and displays or take over the school's social media for a week to send out anti-bullying messages.

Bullying is a social problem and it needs a solution from society – in other words, everyone. The next time you see someone being cruel to someone else, take a stand! Don't laugh or ignore what's happening – tell an adult as soon as possible and help everyone to realise that bullying is not OK.