

# BULLYING

Bullying can be a very frightening experience for young people who are bullied. They can often live in constant fear, not knowing where or when they will be targeted next.

As many as one in five school students are affected at any given point in time.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Physical bullying includes being kicked, punched or tripped and having property damaged.

Verbal bullying is where young people are threatened and put down.

Social bullying is where young people are excluded, ignored or become the target of rumours.

Psychological bullying is harder to pick but often involves subtle behaviours which leave kids feeling manipulated or intimidated.

Cyber bullying occurs when a bully sends abusive messages and pictures via email, mobile phone, social networking sites, chat rooms or instant messaging.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I AM BEING BULLIED?

It is common for young people who are being bullied to feel as though they are responsible for the way they are being treated. The bully causes them to believe they have done something wrong.

If you are feeling this way it is important to remind yourself that you are not to blame. To be free of violence, intimidation and fear is a basic human right. You deserve to be respected, valued and included. You do not have to put up with being bullied. So it's important to talk to someone, let them know what's going on and ask for help.

There are also some practical steps you can take:

Keep out of the bully's way. If possible, avoid areas where they hang out. This may involve eating lunch in a different area of the school or taking a different route home.

Hang out with others. Stick to areas you feel safe and be around people you trust. This may involve playing in open areas used by other kids and monitored by teachers/adults.

Ignore the bully's messages and comments. This is especially true for cyberbullying. If you are being sent nasty

pictures and comments, don't respond to them. Let your parents know and do whatever you can to block the sender. This may involve closing an account on a social networking site or even changing your phone number.

Ask for help. Let someone know what is going on. Seek out an adult who can help you with practical advice and support you emotionally.

## NEED HELP?

**SALVOS COUNSELLING**

[salvos.org.au/more/get-help/bullying](https://salvos.org.au/more/get-help/bullying)

# WHAT DO I DO IF MY FRIEND IS BEING BULLIED?

To begin with, remind them that it is not their fault. They do not deserve to be treated this way. Encourage them to talk to an adult, especially someone like a teacher who has the authority to deal with the situation. Whatever you do, don't take the law into your own hands or place yourself in danger if the bullying involves physical violence.

Where possible be a guardian for your friend by accompanying them when they are frightened or feel unsafe. Recruit a couple of friends and create a group that can act as a buffer zone for the person being bullied. Additionally, you may need to listen and encourage your friend as bullying wears people down, erodes their sense of hope and can even cause depression or anxiety.

Also, you might want to address the broader issue of bullying and become a change agent in your community. Increase people's awareness of the issue and educate your peers about their social responsibility to protect one

another, especially those who are vulnerable. This may involve reminding your friends it is unacceptable to film someone being picked on or to be a passive onlooker while a friend is being bullied. Bullying is everyone's responsibility. We need to create safe communities and look after one another.

Where to find help:

Salvos Counselling  
Youth Beyond Blue  
Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800  
Bullying. No Way!  
ReachOut.com  
Cybersmart Program  
Anti-Bullying Network

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All information on this page is provided by professional counsellors, but is not a substitute for face-to-face professional help. If you or someone you know is struggling with this issue, please seek help as soon as possible.