



If you need to raise a concern about bullying on behalf of your child

It can be so upsetting it is when your child is being bullied. Your first step is to stay calm, collect the evidence and note down what has been happening and when. After discussing next steps with your child and reassuring her/him that nobody deserves to be bullied, you can decide what to do. It is helpful for children and young people if the adults around them do not seem helpless or too emotionally upset. Instead pour your energies into problem solving!

Notify your child's school using their system – they may want parents to tell class teachers in the first instance or contact the head of year.

Ask the office or check the website if you are not sure. This information may be in your child's homework book. Schools must have an internal complaints procedure. If you are not satisfied you might make an appointment to see a deputy head or the headteacher. If this does not solve matters consider approaching the governors. Keep copies of any letters or emails you send, and encourage your child to keep a diary of events if the bullying is continuing. Note down any meetings you have with staff and write to confirm what was agreed. It is perfectly valid for you to take someone along with you to any meeting, this can help remind you of what was said and agreed if you feel too upset to concentrate well.

What do schools have to do?

Schools in England have a legal duty to ensure the safety of all children and young people and to prevent all forms of bullying.

What if it took place off site or in cyberspace?

Head teachers also have powers to respond to bullying outside of school premises, and to search for and confiscate items that may have been used to bully or intimidate (The Education and Inspections Act 2006: The Education Act 2011). For more information on the law and government policy relating to bullying, visit the [policy and guidance](#) section of the Anti-Bullying Alliance website.

If the bullying is online or on a mobile please save the evidence and block the sender. Without the evidence it is difficult to prove what has been happening. Take a screengrab using the PrtScn key on your keyboard or copy and paste the page, or take a picture with your phone.

Get advice from other places

Before making a complaint we would suggest that you seek further advice and support. The following organisations can offer help:

[BIG Award](#) has help pages for young people, parents and professionals

[Children's Legal Centre](#)

[Family Lives](#)

[ChildLine](#)

[Mumsnet](#) has pages where parents talk to each other about bullying affecting their child

Involve your child

Don't take it all out of your child's hands. This makes your child as powerless as the bullying itself. Try to involve your child in decision making and make efforts to encourage your child to feel they are tackling the problem. If one thing does not work, you will try something else. It is simply a Plan B.

Your child may be very nervous about what might happen if you tell the school – children rightly fear retaliation. It is valid for you to ask the school how they will protect your child from such retaliation if it becomes known that he or she has reported what is happening. Your child's safety comes first and so if they are still experiencing the bullying, take all reasonable action to keep them safe such as changing their route to school or travel method - if you have serious concerns for their safety, or you think a crime has been committed against them, then contact the police or the local authority children's services team. In some cases the local community safety team is a valuable help as they know the local neighbourhood well.

If you have followed the complaints procedure and the situation has still not been resolved then you can take the following steps...

Further action you can take

Contact the local authority. Some local authorities retain an anti-bullying co-ordinator. Or other staff who address safety for children and young people. If you have serious concerns for your child's safety then the local authority has a legal duty to protect your child. Ring the council and ask about ways to report a concern about a child. You could also call the [NSPCC](#)

Contact the Secretary of State for Education. As a last resort, if your child is in a maintained school you can contact the Secretary of State for Education. Write a letter setting out the actions you have already taken. to resolve the complaint. Write to The Secretary of State, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT. Visit www.dfe.gov.uk for further details.

Contact Ofsted. Ofsted has created ParentView which allow parents to give their views on their child's school. You will find this on the home page of the [Ofsted](#) website. If sufficient numbers of parents complain about behaviour at the school, Ofsted may be prompted to make an unplanned inspection.

As well as inspecting how schools perform, Under Section 11 of the Education Act 2005, Ofsted can consider certain complaints about schools (these are called 'qualifying complaints'). Qualifying complaints must meet a set of criteria and must raise an issue that affects the school as a whole rather than an individual. You must also have followed the school complaints process before making a complaint to Ofsted. Ofsted carefully considers all complaints received and takes action when it is in its power to do so.

Contact your local MP. Your local MP is there to represent you. They can listen to your concerns about bullying or dangerous behaviour - whether in school or the wider community. They may be able to raise concerns on your behalf with the local authority or the Department for Education. MPs hold local surgeries or can be reached online.

What if my child is in an academy?

If your child is in an academy - after following the internal complaints procedure you can contact the Educational Funding Agency (EFA). The EFA can investigate whether the Academy has considered the complaint appropriately. If it finds that they did not consider the complaint appropriately they can request the Academy to re-consider the complaint. Complaints can be sent by email to academyquestions@efa.education.gov.uk or by post to Academies Central Unit (Academy Complaints), Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH. [For more details on the Academy complaints process.](#)

What if my child is in an independent or boarding school?

If your complaint is about an independent or boarding school you should follow its complaints procedure through the governing body. If you are still dissatisfied after this, you can pursue matters relating to your contract with the school through the courts. If your complaint is that the school is not complying with legal regulations governing independent schools, you can contact Department for Education public enquiries on 0370 000 2288, or at registrationenquiries@education.gsi.gov.uk. The Department will not investigate individual complaints, but can look at regulatory issues. Remember that if your child is at risk of harm or you think a crime has been committed you can always contact the police or the local authority children's services team.

(We are indebted to the Anti-Bullying Alliance for the information in the last two paragraphs)