



The Gordon Schools: Anti-bullying

Anti-bullying Initiatives: Advice for Parents

Bullying is wrong. Nobody has the right to hurt other people by hitting them, calling them names, sending threatening text messages or e-mails, Facebook, spreading rumours or by doing anything else which is intended to be upsetting. Whichever form it takes, bullying can have the effect of frightening the victim, making him or her feel extremely unhappy and powerless. It is always unacceptable.

At The Gordon Schools we are aware that bullying exists, as in every other school, but we aim to minimise it. We expect our young people to develop their talents and abilities to the greatest extent possible and we recognise that this should occur in a happy and secure environment.

Bullying should not be ignored. In Personal and Social Education pupils are encouraged to participate in anti-bullying activities which raise anti-bullying awareness and strategies. Pupils are encouraged to talk to someone they trust such as a teacher, parent or friend. In The Gordon schools we have an Anti-Bullying Awareness week and special assembly. Senior Buddies meet weekly with younger peers to support them in all ways. Parents are always made aware of anti-bullying issues and what they can do. Their concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively by our Guidance Team. Parents are informed of incidents of bullying involving their child.

How can parents recognise bullying?

Parents must trust their instincts. Any change in a child's behaviour may be worth following up. If you are worried, discuss your worries in a frank way with your youngster. Things to look out for include:

- a reluctance to go to school
- asking to be driven to school
- school work deteriorating
- clothes or books torn or damaged
- unexplained bruises or scratches
- becoming withdrawn
- having nightmares
- developing headaches or stomach pains
- coming home hungry (dinner money taken)

Of course, however difficult it is for parents to accept, your child might not be the victim, but the bully.

What should parents do?

- In the first instance, encourage your child to talk about the bullying, but be prepared to accept that he or she might not want to confide in you.
- It is perfectly natural that you might feel anger that your child is being bullied. Don't rush to confront the child who is bullying your son or daughter, or their parents. Arguments between parents usually make the situation worse, rather than better.
- Give your child appropriate advice. Telling a child to hit back seldom works. It can often result in counter claims. Telling a child to ignore those who are teasing and taunting does not deal with the problem. Repeated taunts cannot simply be ignored.
- Work with the school to reinforce the message that bullying is always unacceptable and that it will not stop until people feel free to talk about incidents of bullying.
- Contact the school if you suspect that bullying is taking place. Ask to speak to your child's Guidance teacher, or, if he or she is not available, then to a member of the senior management team.

What will the school do?

- treat matters seriously
- reassure the child that talking to staff is the right course of action
- investigate the incident fully, talking to everyone involved
- take action to stop the bullying, including giving out punishments if the school discipline code has been broken
- use discretion to decide when a conciliatory approach may be more effective
- make sure that both victim and bully know who to approach for help in the future
- inform parents of those involved
- make sure that everyone is aware of the consequences of bullying.

We aim to involve pupils, parents and staff, working together in a partnership against bullying.