

How to approach your child's school

Bullying is an emotional and stressful issue to deal with, explain and report. You may well be the first or even the last to know about what is happening. The following information should help you understand the best way to approach the school with your concerns.

Every school should have an anti-bullying policy in place, this can either be a standalone policy or incorporated into their existing behavioural policy. The policy should explain the reporting procedure the school should follow and their obligations to your child and you. You have the right to ask for this information at any time, and it should be readily available to you.

The first step is to approach an appropriate person at your child's school. This would most likely be your child's teacher or form tutor. Doing this can often help to give you a complete picture of what's going on and may be able to resolve any issues between your child and another in their class quickly and with minimal fuss.

If discussing the issue with your child's teacher does not result in a resolution, the next step would be to discuss the issue with a senior teacher such as the Head of Year. You can ask the staff member to identify clear actions for school and home, that can both keep your child safe and resolve the bullying.

It is worth noting that schools have some powers to tackle bullying outside of school; this includes bullying behaviour around the school grounds, on public transport or in town, especially if the young person in question is in school uniform. Schools should also attempt to tackle any cyberbullying that is linked to events in school.

If, after a reasonable amount of time, you feel the issue has not been resolved, make an appointment to discuss the situation with the head teacher. Give the head teacher time to resolve the issue but make it clear that you expect a response within an agreed timeframe.

Remember that the bullying may not be resolved immediately, so it is important to keep talking to the school about how the actions are progressing so that any problems that arise can be dealt with.





FURTHER CONTACT

If you still feel that the issue has not been dealt with then ask the school for the contact details of the Board of Governors and write to them expressing your concerns in detail. You can usually expect an acknowledgment of your letter within three to five days.

Parents, carers or legal guardians can also take their complaint to their school's local authority or Director of Children's Services. They will need to look at your complaint and the details of all the actions the school took.

Although it is generally accepted that most complaints seldom get to this stage, BeatBullying knows all too well that a number still do and indeed some go further. If you have exhausted all possibilities and official avenues of complaint, and still remain unhappy with decisions or recommendations made, then you may seek further representation by approaching the Secretary of State for Education, or the schools inspection body, Ofsted.

Further information about your legal position and contacting local authorities can be found under the 'Bullying and The Law' section of our website.

Below, you can find some top tips in approaching your child's school.

TOP TIPS FOR APPROACHING YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

When approaching the school about bullying that is happening, it is important to remember the following:

- Try to be calm and non-confrontational with the school. This will keep things constructive and help to keep the lines of communication open.
- Ask to see a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy so that you understand how the school deals with bullying.
- Keep a record of your meetings and communications. It can help if you are unhappy about the way it is being dealt with and wish to escalate the issue further.
- If you feel you are being blocked for any reason, be calm and persistent until you reach who it is you need to speak to.
- If you talk to anybody on the telephone, always make a note of the time, date and get their name.
- If necessary, make sure you copy the appropriate parties into any correspondence.
- You are the parent or carer, it is your son or daughter that you are worried about and if you are not satisfied or in your opinion feel you have been treated unfairly, don't stop. Keep going!