

Heads Up for Wellbeing – Friendships and Bullying

It is likely that young people will encounter issues with friendship groups and unfortunately, may even experience some form of bullying during their time at high school.



How bullying and friendship issues can affect you

Friendships and bullying can have a significant impact on our wellbeing in many ways: socially, mentally and physically. Whilst this can be difficult to deal with to begin with, if left, this could lead to young people developing unhelpful coping strategies such as self-isolation or self-harm and so it is important to try and deal with any incidents of bullying as soon as possible. The young person's ability to engage with school and learning could also be affected. Bullying could take place in a number of different situations such as the home, journeys to and from school, in school, in friendship groups or even online. With access to social media there is now little escape from having to deal with incidents of bullying. In dealing with bullying we would hope to be able to address the needs of both the person being bullied and the person who is doing the bullying.

The symptoms:

Some symptoms of someone having difficulty in their friends or who are being bullied might be:

Friendships

- Not feeling you are a valued
- Not feeling respected, included
- Having a lack of assertiveness and not being able to be yourself around others
- Being unable to maintain and develop friendships and social networks
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling you are missing a supportive network
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Bullying:

- A reluctance to go to school in the morning
- Frequent headaches and stomach-aches
- A change in friendships
- Trouble sleeping
- Crying or intense emotional reactions
- Not wanting to interact with family
- Obsessions or withdrawal from their devices
- Torn clothes and physical marks

You don't have to be on your own with these challenges and make sure to tell someone as soon as you can if you are being bullied.

Getting help

Advice and Support is always available in and outside school for pupils and parents. Here are some things you can do to help.

Where you can seek advice and support:

- Encourage your child to speak to their Pastoral head or PT Girfec
- PSE Lessons - these touch on many subjects but are also an opportunity for you to talk and seek advice.
- Pupils will be offered the opportunity to take part in a 'Restorative Conversation'
- Parents and carers talk to your child's pastoral teacher about your concerns
- Counsellor - our school has access to a counsellor who pupils can be referred to.
- Targeted Support groups can be offered to help young people build resilience, work with others and to build up their self-esteem.
- Joining extra-curricular activity groups or groups in the community are a good way to develop social skills and build relationships with others who share similar interests.

Please read the next page for practical ways to help build positive relationships and deal with forms of bullying.

Things that you can do to help solve friendship issues or take action against bullying.



Building friendships, resolving conflict and dealing with bullying

Pupils

- Try to stay as calm as possible when trying to resolve an issue or fall out with a friend.
- Think before speaking, try to stay focused and talk about what has happened.
- Listen to your friend too and pay attention to them without interrupting them
- Be ready to apologise, forgive and make some changes if you need to.
- When you feel like you have tried, but you can't resolve it yourself, seek adult advice
- Try not to discuss what has happened with lots of people, this can escalate the issue
- If you are being bullied - talk to someone, preferably a trusted adult

Parents

- Listen to your child without getting angry or upset, putting aside your own feelings for a moment to listen to what has happened and how your child feels (but do deal with your feelings later)
- Reassure your child that it is not their fault
- Try out some role play to think of different ways that your child could work out this situation
- Encourage your child to do an activity to build their confidence
- Contact the school to make them aware if they aren't already

Friendships and Bullying – useful contacts – where to get help

www.respectme.org.uk

- Scotland's Anti-bullying Service
- Guidance and resources for children and young people as well as adults
- Follow them on social media - Facebook: respectme Scotland, Twitter: @_respectme, Youtube: RespectmeScotland

www.young.scot

- Type in the search bar 'bullying' to find lots of online content to help you deal with bullying (articles, vlogs, tips and advice)
- Follow them on social media: Facebook: Young Scot, Twitter: @YoungScot, Youtube: Young Scot, Instagram: @youngscot

Other useful websites

- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.cybersmilefoundation.org
- www.childline.org.uk