

Bullying advice for parents

What can parents do to support their kids?

- Teach our kids to recognise when they need help – when they can't solve a problem, or are feeling stressed, upset, scared, sleepless, or overwhelmed.
- Help them make a list of trusted adults they could talk to.
- Teach them the key steps to asking for help, including deciding who to ask, thinking about what to say beforehand, finding a quiet time and place to talk, and telling other people if the first person can't help them.
- Remind them that everyone needs help sometimes – including parents.

What to do if a child is bullied?

- Children sometimes don't want to tell parents that they're being bullied because the parent might take their device away or the parent might go down to the school.
- If your child says they're being bullied, it's important to stay calm and let them know they've done the right thing by telling you.
- Ask them for the full story and explain that bullying is never ok and that's it's normal to feel upset.
- Don't respond to the bullying by becoming aggressive yourself, as this is likely to make things worse.
- Connect with your child's school to discuss the situation. Make an appointment and bring a list of the incidents mentioned by your child. Know the questions you want to ask ahead of time. Bring a support person if you're feeling overwhelmed. Make a time to follow up with the school later to check how things are progressing.
- Every school in Australia should have an anti-bullying policy which you can often find on the school's website. So prepare yourself by reading the document before your meeting.
- The school and teachers will also want the bullying to stop so remember that you're on the same team.

What to do about cyber bullying?

- Bullying often takes place at and around schools. But it also happens online.
- Many parents might have experienced bullying when they were young, but home would be their safe place where they wouldn't have to deal with that anymore. Yet, for today's young people, the bullying can feel like it never stops. When they're at home, they might be receiving messages and seeing things online.
- If the bullying happens online, you can report it to the website where it happens, like Instagram or Facebook.
- If the content is not taken down, the eSafety Commissioner has an online reporting tool where they have a strong compliance rate and provide valued advice to families. Visit <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>.

For more information or support:

Dolly's Dream Support Line

Dolly's Dream in partnership with Kids Helpline provides a free bullying and mental health 24/7 support service. Call 0488 881 033 to connect with a qualified counsellor.

Beacon App

Dolly's Dream has partnered with the Telethon Kids Institute on *Beacon*, the free cyber safety app which provides families with trustworthy, practical resources to help them confidently navigate their children's technology use and reduce associated harms.

Download Beacon now, for free, by scanning this QR code on your phone.

