

Warning signs that teens are bullying or cyber bullying others

Bullying is such an upsetting topic that many parents assume their own kids would never do it. But unfortunately, many teens do bully others at some point – including teens who might be polite and kind at other times.

The good news is: teens can be supported to stop bullying others and make a positive difference instead. But first we have to recognise what's happening.

Many teens who bully others show one or more of these warning signs:

1. Friendship concerns:

- Struggling to fit in socially.
- Very focused on being popular or getting attention from others.
- Hanging out with friends who think bullying is normal or funny.

2. School concerns:

- Getting in trouble at school.
- Struggling in class.
- Saying negative things about school like "I don't care about school", "I don't expect to do well", or "Teachers don't care about me".

3. Health concerns:

- Sleeping problems like insomnia or irregular sleep.
- Physical complaints like headaches, stomachaches, back pain or dizziness.

4. Mood concerns:

- Seeming angry, irritable, anxious, distracted, depressed or impulsive.
- Making remarks about suicide or showing suicidal behaviours.
(If this occurs, please seek help immediately, whether you suspect bullying or not).

5. Online concerns:

- Keeping secrets about what's happening online.
- Using lots of accounts or pretending to be other people online.
- Using devices late at night.
- Very upset if they can't use their devices.
- Treating people disrespectfully online – e.g. sharing embarrassing pics without permission.

6. Behavioural concerns:

- Making unkind or aggressive remarks about people.
- Treating people unkindly – e.g. insults, threats, nasty gossip.
- Not thinking about other people's feelings.
- Unwilling to take responsibility when they do the wrong thing or hurt someone.
- Seen with money or belongings which are not theirs.
- Using alcohol or other drugs.
- Getting into fights.
- Breaking the law.

Remember:

- There is no one type of teen who bullies others. Some are popular and doing well at school, while others have serious problems of their own.
- Some teens who bully others have also been bullied themselves.
- Some teens who show warning signs are not bullying anyone, but have other problems instead. It's important they get help too.
- Some teens who bully others don't show any signs. We must keep talking to all our teens about what's happening at school and online.



If you are concerned about a child or young person, please seek help. Speak to a trusted GP, school wellbeing staff, or a helpline such as:

- Dolly's Dream Support Line 0488 881 033
- Parentline in your state or territory
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- eheadspace 1800 650 890
- Lifeline 13 11 14.