

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour which causes harm or hurt and is done deliberately and repeatedly. A person being bullied may feel intimidated, helpless, or unable to stop it happening.

Bullying can be:

- **physical** – such as hitting, shoving, tripping or kicking
- **verbal** – such as insults, threats, or nasty teasing
- **social** – such as spreading ugly rumours or telling people not to be friends with someone
- **cyber** – such as spreading nasty gossip about someone online or posting embarrassing pics without their permission. Cyber bullying can be anonymous, involve large numbers of people, and go on 24/7.

The **national definition** of bullying for Australian schools (bullyingnoway.gov.au) says: *Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.*

Did you know...

- Around 1 in 4 school-aged children in Australia has been bullied recently, with 1 in 5 bullied online recently. Each year, approximately 45 million bullying incidents occur in Australian schools.
- School is the most common place where teens experience bullying, followed by online spaces. Most teens who have been bullied online have also been bullied in person.
- Teens affected by bullying may suffer harm to their wellbeing, education and relationships. Compared to unaffected teens, they are at higher risk of various health problems, including mental health concerns and suicidal thoughts or behaviours.
- The risks are especially high for teens who have been bullied and have also bullied others.
- However, with the right support, teens can recover from bullying. They can use their past experiences to help others and build skills in empathy, help-seeking and problem-solving.
- Sometimes teens understand bullying differently to adults or have been hurt by other bad behaviours. Rather than arguing about 'is it really bullying?', we should focus on finding out what happened, the impacts, and what we can do to keep everyone safe and respected.