

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE A VICTIM OF BULLYING AT SCHOOL

School bullying continues to be on the rise and is happening at earlier ages. Bullying is not just physical this also covers mental and verbal abuse. Today the increase of cyber bullying is on the increase. As a parent, how do you know if your child is a victim of bullying? There are some definite warning signs to watch for. The following are potential indicators of being bullied:

1. **A drastic drop in grades:** In many instances of bullying, the victim constantly feels fearful, apprehensive or even terrorised. He or she is more focused on when the next bullying will occur, rather than on the information being presented by the teacher. Class work and tests begin to suffer due to this lack of concentration.
2. **Being mean to younger siblings:** Because of being bullied, many children will take out their frustrations on younger siblings. You might begin to notice threats, destroying a sibling's toy or a drawing, or shoving.
3. **Claims to be sick:** If your child asks to stay home from school frequently, but doesn't appear to be sick, he/she might be being bullied. If his/her attitude toward school is negative or he/she insists that you pick him/her up rather than coming home in their normal way, investigate the situation.
4. **Unexplained bruises or injuries:** Although all kids will experience bumps and bruises from time to time, if you begin to notice such injuries and your child won't tell you how they happened, this could be a sign of bullying.
5. **Change in Lunch:** Many bullying incidences occur at lunch time. If your child no longer wants to buy his/her lunch or is demanding a certain type of sandwich or sweet, he/she might be being forced to hand over his/her lunch or money to a bully.
6. **Sudden mood changes:** When being a victim of bullying, a child is under a lot of emotional and mental stress. He/she just wants to make it through the day and arrive back home. He/she may become quiet and withdrawn and anxious when having to leave the house. He/she may also become moody and bad tempered.
7. **Change in sleeping or eating habits:** The trauma of being bullied can cause a child to lose his/her appetite or to begin binge eating. He/she may experience sleepless nights and suffer from nightmares.
8. **Replacing 'lost' items:** if your child is losing valuable items: phone; electronic games etc.
9. **Change in Friends:** You may find your child is falling out with previously close friends; or no longer want to go out to play when they come home from school.

What should you do if you recognize some of these signs in your child? You should first determine if your child is a victim of bullying. More information can be found at www.bullying.co.uk