

This section aims at providing schools with reference materials for parent education in school bullying. Schools can help parents understand the nature, symptoms of bullying, and methods of supporting their children through seminars, parent-teacher sharing sessions, information booklets, newsletters, the school-parent website, etc.

## **Observation and Verification**

### **1. What is bullying?**

In general, bullying is a repeated and intended act of harm or oppression of a less powerful person by a person or a group of persons who is more powerful or in a larger number.

### **2. Bullying includes three basic components:**

- Repeated act
- Malicious intent
- Imbalance of power

### **3. The four common types of bullying:**

- Bullying involving physical violence: e.g. Punching, kicking, slapping, hitting, shoving, tripping, pulling hair, extorting money or properties, etc.
- Verbal bullying: e.g. intimidating, using abusive languages, cursing, defaming, name-calling, mockery and taunting, etc.
- Indirect bullying: e.g. spreading rumours, being hostile, deliberately isolating, boycotting and rejecting someone, etc.
- Cyber-bullying: with the drastic development of information technology in recent years, cyber bullying behaviours emerge in the internet world. Cyber bullying generally refers to bullying incidents happened through information technology communication platform, such as through e-mails, text messages, websites, online forums, etc. Apart from text messages to mock and slander others, cyber bullying also includes photos, short video clips, sound, etc., which embarrass and intimidate the victims.

### **4. Effects of bullying on children:**

Children being bullied live in humiliation and rejection. If bullying remains unsolved, it may influence them in the following ways :

- Affect their learning performance
- Result in truancy, skipping class or dropping out of school
- Influence their physiological and psychological performance (including physical and emotional conditions)

- Trigger vengeful deeds, etc.

## **5. Teaching children about the serious consequences of bullying:**

The problem of bullying should not be ignored as it may lead to other serious and harmful behaviour (e.g. suicide and revenge with violence). Parents need to help their children understand that the act of bullying is not for fun or simply like playing games with their friends. In some serious cases, the behaviour of the bullies and the bystanders may be liable to criminal charges.

Regarding the problem of cyber bullying, parents should firstly enhance their knowledge on the cyber world. They should pay attention to the webpages their children browse, teach them how to protect their personal information carefully, avoid talking with strangers and accompany young children in surfing the internet. In addition, parents should teach their children that gossiping online may constitute a slander and the sender may be liable to criminal offence.

Parents should communicate more with their children in daily life and pay attention to their needs for growth at different stages so as to understand their problem and provide assistance to children involved in bullying as soon as possible.

## **6. Suspecting your child being bullied**

If your child shows the following symptoms, it may reflect that he / she is being bullied by classmates. Parents should pay more attention and assist your child in solving the problem as soon as possible.

### **Checklist of “The Signs of Being Bullied”:**

- Feel frustrated or worried, not willing to reveal what things are bothering them.
- Have complained of being bullied, boycotted or treated badly by classmates.
- Behaviours and emotions change significantly (e.g. insomnia, anxiety, loss of appetite, having headache / stomachache without any reasons, sudden burst of temper, showing aggressiveness to brothers or sisters without any reasons).
- Fear of leaving home / change of the route to school without any reasons / reluctant to go to school/ truant without any reasons.
- Request to transfer school or leave school without any reasons.
- Clothes torn after going out or going to school / books and belongings damaged or lost without any reasons.

- Bruises or injuries appear without any reasons.
- Have talked about using violent or rule-breaking ways to handle behaviours of other students.
- Academic performance falls significantly.
- Request for extra money or exhibit stealing behaviour.

If many of the above signs appear, parents should pay more attention to your child and observe the changes of his / her behaviours and emotions. Parents should take the initiative to contact his / her teachers or friends to understand what bothers your child, including whether he / she is being bullied by his / her classmates.

## **7. Suspecting your child bullying others**

If your child shows the following symptoms, it is likely that he / she has the tendency to bully others. Parents need to pay more attention and help him / her solve the problems as soon as possible.

### **Checklist of “Signs of Bullying Others”:**

- Fond of playing tricks on others for fun.
- Enjoy damaging things.
- Feel excited when seeing other kids being bullied.
- Mistreat small animals or persons with smaller size frequently.
- Feel happy when seeing other children doing something wrong.
- Feel powerful when mistreating other kids.
- Often get angry that lasts for a long period of time.
- Often attribute causes of unfavourable incidents to others.
- In favour of revenge when being hurt.
- Feel jealous or get angry about others’ success.
- Unable to accept any loss in playing games with others.

If many of the above signs appear, parents should pay more attention to your child’s behaviours and emotions. Parents should take the initiative to contact his / her teachers in order to understand your child’s behaviours, interpersonal relationship and study performance at school.

## **8. Listen to what your child thinks:**

It is very important for your child to build up confidence on you. Trust will be fostered as children feel care from parents and realize that he / she will be listened to and get the help when in need. Eventually he / she will also be more willing to open up and talk about the problem of bullying. Your child is probably not willing to tell you that he / she bullies others or is being bullied. They probably think that:

- "Your help will only make things worse."
- "My problems will still be neglected finally."
- "I will be threatened and will not be protected."
- "The bullies may take revenge on me."
- "I will be blamed as an informer or a sneak."
- "It's only a trifle and it's not so serious. Such things often happen."
- "It's my own fault for being bullied. I incurred it by myself. I can handle my own problems."
- "It's just for fun and nothing special!"
- "He got beaten up because he looks hateful. He deserves it!"
- "If I don't build up a considerable status for myself, others will come to bully me."

Parents should listen to what their child thinks, clarify the truth or problems and consider how to help them improve and /or seek help:

- Does your child need help?
- What should be done to stop the child from being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviour?
- What action can you, as parents, take?
- Who can help to stop the problem from aggravating?
- How can you seek help?