



Guiding's Guide to... saying NO! to bullying

Being bullied is hurtful and frightening and happens to many of us at one time or another. It can make you feel lonely and isolated and eat away at your confidence. Girls tend to be bullied by other girls in ways that can be more emotional and less obvious than physical bullying. It can be difficult to know who to talk to or where to go for help.

This guide offers advice on where to find help, who you can trust and how to deal with bullies.



Girlguiding UK:
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Mental Health Foundation

1. Don't ignore it – get support



Unfortunately, ignoring bullies doesn't mean they'll go away. In fact, it might even make things worse. As soon as someone starts bullying you or a friend, tell someone you trust, such as a family member, a teacher, a guiding Leader or a friend. By getting support from someone you trust, you won't have to deal with it on your own. If you would prefer to talk to someone you don't know, call Childline on 0800 1111.

2. Be prepared – practise responding to comments

When people are aggressive or intimidating it can be difficult to know what to say or how to act towards them, especially when you're put on the spot. Sadly, showing signs of fear or anxiety can encourage bullies. With a friend or someone you trust, try practising ways you could respond to a bully. This might help you feel more confident the next time it happens and give the impression that you're not affected by their actions, even if you are inside.

3. Look confident – pretending not to be there is likely to draw more attention

It can be tempting to fade into the background and hope that no one notices you. However, lots of bullies target people who seem quiet, timid and less likely to challenge them. Walk tall.

4. Pick good friends – don't hang around with people who aren't nice to you

Real friends are people who make you feel happy and good about yourself. They give as much to you as you do to them and are there when you need them. Good friends are never the people who put you down, make you feel bad or order you around.



5. Be a good friend – show your friends that they matter to you

We all want our friends to be nice to us, look out for us and care about our feelings – so do the same for them. Try not to upset your friends, reveal to other people their secrets or exclude them if other friends don't like them. By being a good friend you will earn trust and loyalty, have more fun and have a strong support network to rely on if life gets tough.

6. Get proactive – find friends in other places

If you are feeling left out and finding it hard to fit in, it can help to join a club or take part in activities where there are other people with the same interests as you. You could join a sports team or go to an art class. You might make some good friends who will make you feel better about yourself and boost your confidence.



7. Stay private – cyber bullies thrive on personal information

Cyber bullying is the sending of messages via mobile phones, email or social networking sites, and it's on the rise. The best way to prevent this from happening to you is to protect your personal information. Give your mobile number and email address only to good friends, and always use privacy controls on your online profiles. Don't speak to anyone online unless you are certain that you know who they are.

8. Avoid fighting – just walk away

Sometimes, girls can get physically aggressive and try to start a fight which can quickly get out of hand. Bullies who act like this are normally using their advantage of being bigger and stronger, and you may end up out of your depth. For more information on how to deal with difficult or frightening situations, you can ask your parents to call the Kidscape helpline on 08451 205 204.

9. Keep company – try not to be on your own

It is intimidating to be approached by bullies when you're on your own. If there is a particular person or group that makes you feel threatened, make sure that wherever possible you are with friends or an adult so that you've got support.



10. Be self-aware – don't let thoughtlessness lead you to bully others

This may sound strange but sometimes, to be liked or to feel part of a group, you could end up bullying someone yourself. Think about how a person feels when they get bullied – it can cause real emotional pain and can affect someone for a long time afterwards. If you think you are bullying someone, talk to an adult you trust or call Childline on 0800 1111.