

How to Spot and Handle Bullying for School-Age Kids

Bullying can hurt 5–10-year-olds, whether at school, tuition, or family gatherings. In Pakistan, where kids face social pressures, knowing how to spot and handle bullying is key. Here's a guide.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated, intentional harm—physical (hitting), verbal (teasing), or social (excluding). It's not a one-off fight but a pattern that makes kids feel powerless.

Signs of Bullying

- **Physical:** Unexplained bruises, torn clothes, or missing items.
- **Emotional:** Sudden fear of school, moodiness, or not wanting to play with friends.
- **Behavioral:** Avoiding certain places (like the school bus) or losing interest in studies.
- **Physical complaints:** Frequent headaches or stomachaches, especially before school.

How to Handle Bullying

1. **Listen calmly:** If they share, say, "I'm glad you told me. Let's fix this." Don't blame them.
2. **Teach responses:**
 - Say, "Stop it" firmly or walk away.
 - Tell a teacher or trusted adult: "Sir, he's teasing me."
 - Practice at home to build confidence.
3. **Talk to the school:** Meet the teacher or principal. Ask about their anti-bullying policy. Be polite but firm.
4. **Build their confidence:** Praise strengths: "You're so kind to your cousin!" Enroll in sports or art to boost self-esteem.
5. **Monitor online:** Check for cyberbullying in games or WhatsApp groups. Teach: "Don't reply to mean messages—show me."
6. **Desi tip:** Share stories like Bilal (RA)'s bravery to inspire standing up kindly.

Preventing Bullying

- **Teach kindness:** Model saying "shukriya" or sharing at dawats.
- **Role-play:** Practice saying "That's not nice" for teasing scenarios.
- **Encourage friendships:** Arrange playdates to build a supportive circle.
- **Check in daily:** Ask, "What made you happy or sad at school?"

Pakistani Context

- **Joint families:** Watch for cousin rivalries that turn mean. Set clear rules: “No name-calling.”
- **Cultural norms:** Address comments like “Mota hai” as bullying, not jokes.
- **School dynamics:** If tuition kids tease, talk to the tutor for group rules.

When to Worry

If your child seems depressed, avoids school, or talks about hurting themselves, seek a counselor or pediatrician immediately.

Why It Works

Listening and empowering your child stops bullying from stealing their joy. You’re their safe space.

Ask, “How was school today?” and really listen—your kid needs you now.