When teasing becomes bullying

This guide will help you to:

- Understand more about bullying
- Learn how to deal with it
LINKS TO SECTIONS:

What is teasing? .................................................. 3
What is bullying? .................................................. 4
There are many types of bullying .......................... 5
Where can bullying happen? ................................. 7
What about young people who bully? .................. 8
What can you do about bullying? ......................... 10
What can adults do about bullying? ...................... 11
What else can you do? ........................................... 13
What is teasing?

Most people have been teased at some stage. Teasing can be different things.

There is nice teasing – this may be when someone makes a little joke about another person. Or it can be a bit of chat back and forth between people. Families or friends often tease each other in a jokey, fun way.

Or teasing can be unkind – a situation when you are made fun of, or put down, when someone calls you names, makes faces or hides your things. Even if it’s only a few, rare times, it can be upsetting, even if nothing much is meant by it. Sometimes it’s a thoughtless thing, where the teaser thinks it’s funny or clever and doesn’t really think about how much they are upsetting you.

When you’re teased about the same thing again and again, or teased about something that bothers you, then it doesn’t matter how light-hearted other people think it is, it can be very hurtful.
What is bullying?
Bullying is anything done to deliberately upset, humiliate or hurt you by the same person or group of people.

Bullying is when you’re teased or picked on in a nasty way and you are finding it upsetting and difficult to deal with. It’s when the teasing goes on over and over again.

It can be very hard for young people who look, sound or seem different – especially as bullying can happen more often.

Zoe says:
“When I was in year three, I was bullied a lot. I was tied up by my hands and legs by two boys who were bullying me. I had pins pushed into the bottom of my shoes which really hurt when I walked anywhere. People threw handfuls of mud at me. Whenever I went to hang up my coat, they would block my path so that I
could not get to my hanger and then I would be late getting to class.

“I did not know how to confront the bullies. I was really upset by the way they were treating me and that they didn’t seem to care how I was feeling.”

Bullying can be very difficult to face, but there are ways to deal with it. First of all, let's look at what bullying means a bit more.

**There are many types of bullying:**

**Using words:** Being nasty or using mean words about you…
name-calling… talking behind your back…
spreading rumours… blaming you for things you haven’t done… telling lies… getting you into trouble… putting you down… making you feel upset… frightening you… threatening you…
making you do something you don’t want to do…
Doing something:
Making faces, gestures or noises... staring or shouting at you... pushing or pinching... slapping or punching... hair pulling... throwing things at you... anything else that hurts you physically...
hiding, breaking or stealing your things... demanding money... putting pictures of you up in a public place, like at school... ignoring you – or stopping other people from talking to you or being friends with you... following you – never leaving you alone – or lying in wait for you.

Using phones, computers, social networking sites:
- Posting nasty messages or pictures or videos on You Tube, Facebook or Twitter or other social media
- Hacking into your phone or online account, then sending or posting messages or pictures from you to make you seem mean or gossipy
- Doing the same by stealing your identity by setting up a new account under your name (and this is also illegal)
- Making silent calls, abusive calls or texts, threats by phone.
Where can bullying happen?

The short answer is – **ANYWHERE!**

**It can happen in places like:**

At school or college or where you do hobbies

At home or someone else’s home

In a playground or park or leisure centre

In the street or a shopping centre or the cinema

On the bus, train or other public transport

**It can also happen through:**

- Phone, email, text, Skype, Viber
- Facebook, Bebo, You Tube, My Space, Twitter or other sites
- Online chatrooms or forums
- Instant messages like BBM, MSN, WhatsApp, Google Messenger or Yahoo Messenger.
If you are being bullied, you probably feel very upset, worried, angry ashamed, humiliated or sad about it. You might think there is nothing you can do about it. But there is… read on…

What about young people who bully?

Bullying can make a person feel:

- Powerful, especially when they see you’re upset
- Big and tough and more confident (when underneath they are none of these things)
- Better about themselves – by giving you a hard time.

Young people might bully because they:

- Are unconfident and insecure underneath all the bravado
- Are jealous or resentful
- Have been bullied in the past
- Are being bullied themselves now.
What else?

- Often, if there is a group bullying, there is a stronger person who is in charge – the ‘ringleader’
- Young people can be cunning and make sure they bully in places where they won’t be seen by adults.
- Although someone is picking on something about you, it’s probably for other reasons or to make them feel better about themselves.

Most importantly, it’s good to remember that even though it’s really hard and can make you feel less confident…

being bullied is not your fault!
What can you do about bullying?

**TELL SOMEONE**

- Young people who bully usually think you won’t tell anyone – that’s often how they get away with it!
- Telling someone is a big step towards getting the bullying to stop
- You might not want to tell anyone – you might be worried it will make it worse. It’s not unusual to feel embarrassed or worried or scared – and it can seem like a hard thing to do

- BUT, it’s really important that you do tell someone – your parents or carers, a teacher or any adult you trust
- If you feel like you can’t do it face to face, try writing a letter or sending a text or email
- If you are hurt at school, tell a teacher straightway and ask them to report it to the school. And it’s very important to tell your parents or carers as soon as you can
What can adults do about bullying?

Report it to the police

Here are some useful legal facts:

- The age when a young person can be charged with a crime in the UK is 10 years (except Scotland, where it’s 12)
- Hitting or kicking someone is an assault
- Under the 1997 Harassment Act, it is against the law in the UK to use the phone system - which includes the internet - to cause alarm or distress. So someone who is threatening you on the internet or by phone could be committing a criminal offence
- Calling you names or making rude gestures to you over and over again could also be seen as harassment.

Report it to the school

- Most schools have an anti-bullying policy and all young people have the right to feel safe at school
- Report it to the school if the bullying is happening at or on the way there
- So, once the school knows about it, they should take steps to make sure it stops
✓ This might mean your parents or carers need to make sure the school is kept informed by reporting it each time it happens and following up.

Report it to the local council or the bus company

❖ If the bullying takes place on the bus, your parents or carers could report it to the local council and ask that the person who is bullying has their bus pass taken away
❖ Or they could complain to the bus company.

Parents, carers, teachers and other adults can also:
★ Look out for you and help you to feel safe
★ Help you to deal with your phone or online accounts
★ Help you come up with useful suggestions or ideas
★ As a last resort, discuss moving schools or making other changes.

Remember, the more you tell them, the more they can help you!

What else can you do?

Keep a record of times you are bullied
Write down what happened, when it happened (day, date and time), where it was and who was there. If someone is telling lies about bullying you, the police might find it hard to tell who is telling the truth. This way, you will have a record to show them.

Don’t show your feelings in front of those who are bullying you

😊 Bullying can be very upsetting – it can make you feel angry, humiliated or scared
😊 Although it’s hard, try not to show this – people who bully can get satisfaction from seeing you upset
😊 Try using phrases to show you don’t care, like:

“You… whatever.”
“I don’t really care what you say.”

😊 And then calmly turn and walk away
😊 Don’t bottle it all up though – make sure you talk to your close friends or family afterwards and tell them what happened.

Ask them to stop

This is simple – look the person in the eye - say calmly and clearly,

“Please will you stop bullying me. I don’t like it.”
Walk away

Remove yourself. Simply walk away, especially if you feel scared or worried... and then make a note of what happened.

For more tips on how to deal with people, see the CONFIDENCE TOOL KIT – especially the Stand up for yourself, Funny, Motto, Armour and Body language tools.

Don’t get angry or hit back

- Try to stay in control and don’t let anger get the better of you
- Don’t be tempted to shout or hit them back – you could get hurt (or end up in trouble yourself)
- The main thing is to try and stay safe
- If necessary, shout out to attract attention or hold your hands up to defend yourself, but without hitting out.
Stay in safe places

As people don’t like to be seen when they are bullying, it makes sense to try to stay in places where there are other people, especially adults. Some things to try, if possible, are:

★ At school, stay near teachers or other staff. If anyone starts to bully you, they will be caught in the act!
★ Sit near the driver on the bus or near adults on a train
★ If the bullying happens at the same place in the street or park, take a different route or go to a different place. Leave a bit earlier… or later. If it is dark, try to stay in places where there are lots of streetlights.
★ If you are going out, take people with you – friends or family – as much as you can. Get your friends to stick with you at school to help you out.
★ Take no notice if you are called a ‘coward’ for doing this – it’s probably said because it makes it harder to bully you. So, it’s sensible and keeps you safe.

Get other people to say what they have seen

- Ask any adults who are nearby to write down what they saw
- You can also ask your friends or other young people to do this
- You might have to do a bit of convincing – maybe get a friend to help you
- It can be a bit tricky because, sometimes, they might worry they will be bullied if they tell
- If you all club together, you can stand up against people who bully and make sure something is done!

Control your online accounts and your phone

- Don’t give anyone your passwords
- Try to change passwords often
- Lock your phone
- Change settings so only your friends or the people you want can see your profile and details
- Block people who you don’t want to be in touch with you
- Report problems to the company who runs the website – ask them if they can remove any bullying posts
- Stay calm - don’t be rude back – simply make a statement to tell them to stop bullying you
- Think about what you put on these sites and who might see them
- Close your account and open a new one or change your sim.
Bullying is nasty teasing that happens over and over
Bullying can happen anywhere, including online
Bullying is not your fault!
If you are being bullied:
  - Tell someone
  - Keep a diary
  - Stay calm - keep your cool
  - Walk away
Check out the CONFIDENCE TOOLKIT to help you learn new skills to deal with bullying

And here are some other sites that might be able to help:
www.bullying.co.uk
www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Bullying.aspx
www.kidscape.org.uk
www.beatbullying.org
Supporting and advising
Changing Faces offers information, advice and support to children, parents and adults with scars, marks or conditions that affect their appearance.

Informing
We work to improve policy and practice in organisations. Through staff training and consultancy we help to create fair and inclusive environments.

Campaigning
We campaign for social change. We aim to promote a society in which people are treated fairly and equally.