

Student Services

Leading adolescent and child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has put together six webisodes to give parents practical tips to deal with bullying. Below is a transcript of his practical advice about 'How can you work with the school?' The webisode is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hbwDQmvi8A>

How can you work with the school?

It can be really upsetting and daunting to have to approach your child's school when you find out they are being bullied, and many parents aren't actually sure what to do.

Your child may not want to tell the school about the bullying; however, it's incredibly important that you let the school know.

Talking about the problem with your child's teacher is an important step in solving it.

Make a time to talk to your child's teacher, school counsellor, guidance officer, deputy principal or the principal.

Be as clear as possible about what happened.

Ask what the school intends to do, and ask for a follow-up meeting.

Keep in touch with the school and let the staff know if the problem continues.

Remain calm and be constructive.

Remember, the objective here is to end the bullying.

I'd encourage you to call the school and set up an appointment to talk with your child's teacher.

He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers at school.

Share your concerns about your child and ask the teacher such questions as:

- How does my child get along with other students in his or her class?
- With whom does he or she spend free time?
- Have you noticed, or have you ever suspected, that my child is bullied by other students?
- Is there conflict with one student or a group of students?
- Why does the teacher think your child is being targeted?

Talk to the teacher about all forms of bullying - physical, verbal, social (the covert type), psychological and cyber bullying - to make sure that all forms are explored.

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Ask the teacher to talk with other adults who interact with your child at school (such as the music teacher, PE teacher, or even bus driver) to see whether they have observed students bullying your child.

If you're not comfortable talking with your child's teacher, or if you are not satisfied with the conversation, then you should make an appointment to meet with the principal to discuss your concerns.

Keep a written record of all conversations and agreements.

If you obtain information from your child, or from staff at your child's school, that leads you to believe that he or she is being bullied, ask to work with your school on an action plan.

This plan should outline the steps that can be taken at school, and at home, to help your child.

It's important to make a follow-up appointment in a week's time to discuss your child's progress.