

"I ENTRUSTED MY SON TO THE SCHOOL.  
THEY LET US DOWN."

The impact of bullying: views of parents

P A R E N T L I N E  
P L U S  
B R I E F I N G  
2 0 0 8

# Definitions

## Parent

Throughout this report we use the word parent to refer to anyone caring for a child or young person. The term includes mothers, fathers, stepparents, grandparents and other carers.

## Bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as follows:

### What is bullying?

**Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms. Accounts of children and young people, backed up by research, identify bullying as any behaviour that is:**

- **Harmful, carried out by an individual or a group**
- **Repetitive, wilful or persistent**
- **An imbalance of power, leaving the person being bullied feeling defenceless**

**Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour.**

**It can include any of the following:**

**name calling, taunting, threats, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking and damaging belongings, gossiping, excluding people from groups, and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. These actions can take place face-to-face, via third parties, or via other means such as text messages and emails.**

**(ABA 2006a)**

A recent Swedish study highlights the difficulty in defining reasons for bullying and the lack of consensus among academics studying bullying. Some academics report that bullies have low self-esteem whereas others indicate that they do not. A third view is that there is no difference between the self-esteem of bullies, victims and bully-victims (those who are victims in one situation and bullies in another situation) (Frisen et al 2007). The findings from Parentline Plus' analysis favour this third view that one individual can be both bully and victim in different circumstances and that self-esteem is a factor in a considerable number of cases.

## Long calls

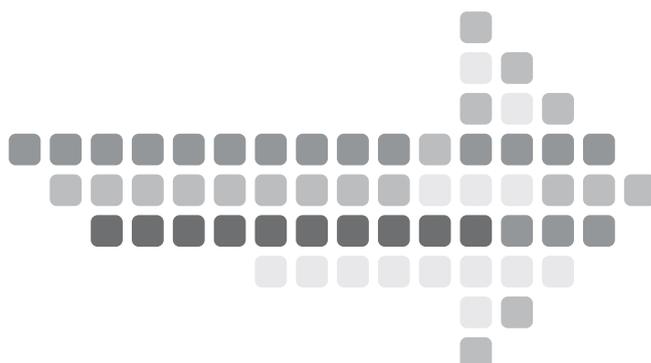
Our 'long calls' are completed calls when parents are seeking our help, our 'short calls' are calls which are curtailed by the caller or ones where the caller is seeking information about another organisation. It should be noted that call takers collect as many details as possible but it is not always appropriate to ask for demographic information.

Over the course of a long call, the call takers collect details on the following:

- Relationship of caller to person causing concern
- Family make-up of the family causing concern
- The subject of concern, including their age and gender
- Any child issues (the main reason for the call or any supplementary issues)
- Any adult issues (the main reason for the call or any supplementary issues)
- Referrals to other Parentline Plus services or other organisations, if relevant
- Demographic information
- How did they find out about Parentline Plus
- A free text box to record any other feedback

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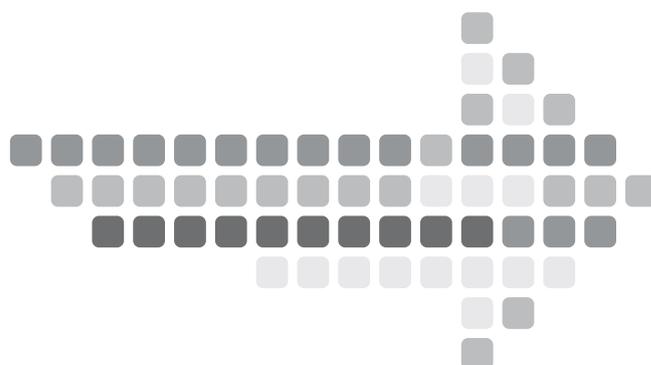
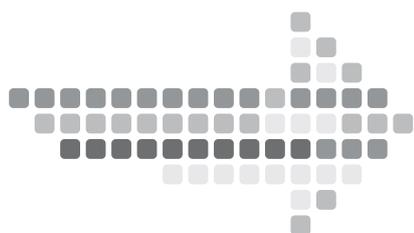


# 1. Introduction

This report looks at a sample of 18,320 long calls taken by Parentline during the period April – September 2008 and looks in detail at a subset of 706 calls which concerned bullying as the primary reason for calling. Bullying also featured as an additional reason in 306 calls, possibly alongside several other additional reasons, but unless otherwise stated this report looks at the 706 calls where bullying was the primary reason for calling. The research into calls was supplemented with a web survey undertaken in 2007 for the Office of the Children’s Commissioner. This report is being issued for Anti-Bullying week, as part of a whole series of activities to highlight the need to tackle bullying quickly and effectively. Many of these activities are publicised by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on their website [www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk)

Parentline Plus has always taken calls on bullying, and has produced regular reports on this issue (see Parentline Plus 2006 and 2008a); calls on bullying form between 4 – 6% of all long calls to Parentline, with some seasonal variations. We chose the time frame April – September 2008 in order to take advantage of our newly-refined call data recording system, which went live in April 2008. However, this refined system means that we cannot accurately compare data from previous months or years.

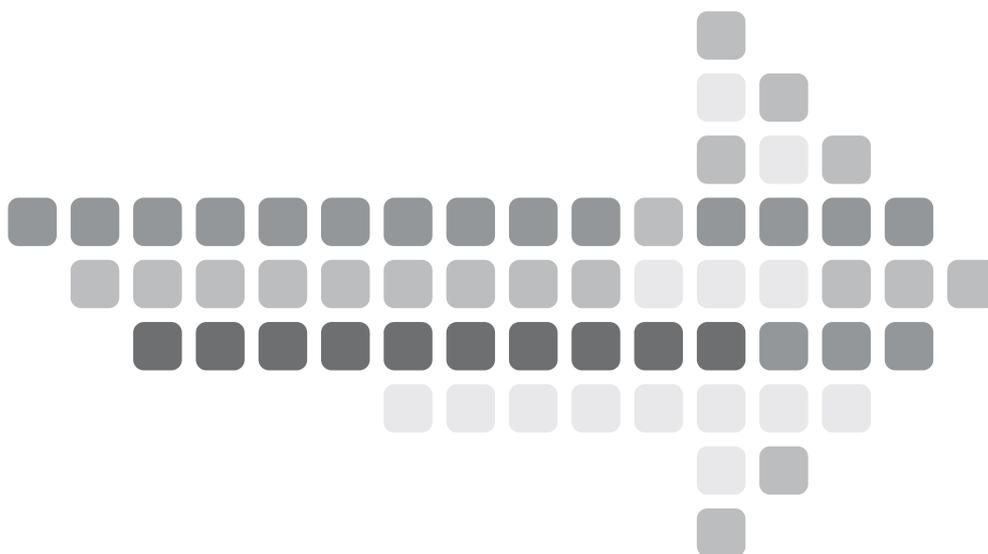
Parentline Plus, with funding from the DCSF, has undertaken considerable work with parents and schools to develop effective ways that schools can tackle bullying with the full involvement and support of parents, and will be launching a dedicated website for parents concerned about bullying in November 2008, [www.besomeonetotell.org.uk](http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk). We also produce a series of information leaflets on bullying for parents.



## 2. Background

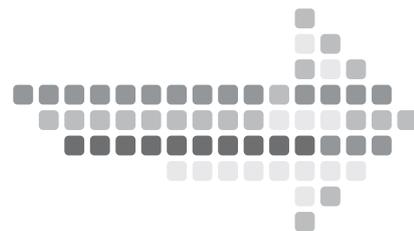
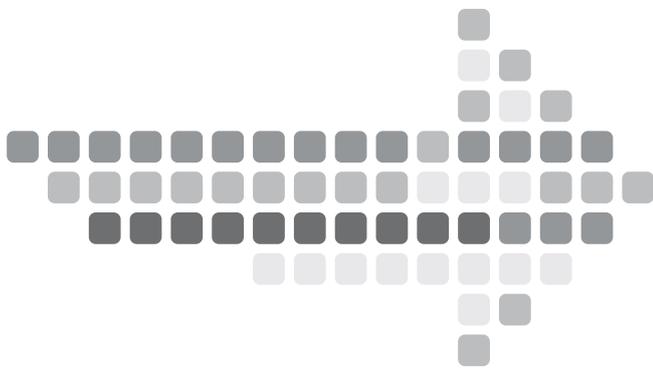
Government has been consistent in insisting that schools tackle bullying and in 2007 issued a suite of guidance documents under the heading 'Safe to Learn' to support schools, other settings and families to eliminate bullying (DCSF 2007a). The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) says:

**It is compulsory for schools to have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying. The DCSF supports schools in designing their anti-bullying policies, and their strategies to tackle bullying, by providing comprehensive practical-guidance documents. Regional advisers with expertise in the field of bullying are also on hand to help schools implement the guidance and draw on best practice. (DCSF 2007b)**



### 3. Key findings

- Callers ringing about bullying report the serious impact of the bullying on their child's education and on their emotional and mental health. It is striking that the overwhelming impact is to make the child fearful, withdrawn, isolated and even suicidal. Clearly bullying has a serious and potentially very damaging long-term impact on a child.
- Callers ringing about bullying are often dealing with multiple concerns – it is not just bullying, but also challenging behaviour, and hugely worrying emotional and mental health issues. This means that many parents are really challenged in dealing with what is a challenging issue in itself.
- Callers concerned about bullying straddle across social class with middle class and higher income families more likely to call on this issue than on other issues.
- Callers concerned about bullying are more likely to come from married couple families compared to all callers to Parentline.
- Callers express feelings of huge frustration and often seem as helpless as their child, and can take on very difficult feelings of failure because they have been unable to protect their child.
- There are differences in experiences which are linked to income, gender and race.
- Almost three quarters of calls to Parentline about bullying report the bullying takes place at school (74%) with bullying in the home (9%), in social settings (9%) and other locations (7%) following behind.



## 4. Recommendations

Working with parents and children makes all the difference. Parents often have ideas about the best way to tackle the problem and want to support the school to make their child's experience a happy one.

**"A parent or teacher cannot take responsibility for everything and it does not help the children for them to do so. But they can teach the child to deal with their feelings and problems in a constructive way... teachers cannot make every parent's and child's problems right. But by listening to each other, working as a team there will be cooperation and we will be communicating assertively without blame or recrimination, which in turn teaches the child to deal with their feelings in times of upset or difficulty."**

**Parentline Plus service user, local bullying workshops**

Failing to build a productive relationship with parents is hugely damaging for the child and the family.

**"I don't have much faith left."**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has a series of position statements on bullying and how it should be tackled that Parentline Plus endorses (ABA 2006b). In particular, this report suggests that:

Bullying must be taken seriously by schools. It is not acceptable and must be tackled in a way that empowers the whole school community. It is particularly important to tackle behaviours by teachers and other school staff that is experienced as bullying by children and their parents otherwise a culture of bullying remains in place.

Anti-bullying work needs to happen on a continuous basis. Bullying is endemic and therefore tackling it needs to be ongoing.

It is important to listen carefully and respectfully to what parent and child are saying about bullying; the impact is serious, but the experiences will vary, and the perceptions will vary.

Involving parents in the life of the school before problems arise will pay dividends because if a strong and trusting relationship is already in place, tackling difficult issues such as bullying becomes much easier to handle.

Schools must pay particular attention to parents who find it difficult to engage with the school, and make special efforts to reach out to them, in order to develop mutual trust and respect and therefore be in a position to tackle issues such as bullying.

Children who are involved in bullying also experience other serious difficulties, and therefore their parents and carers face multiple challenges. It is vital to reach out and offer help and support to these parents so that they can help their children.

**"In our school I see parent after parent trooping into the headteacher's office talking about the same problems. This takes up a lot of our headteacher's time, sorting things out one at a time. Each parent feels that they are the only one going through the problem. If there were a representative forum...where parents and teachers could work together to address issues such as bullying and other behaviour, this would help."**

**Parentline Plus service user, local bullying workshops**

# 5. Findings

The following analyses look at data collected from 706 calls concerning bullying made to Parentline between April and September 2008. Parents may call us about their child experiencing bullying or doing the bullying but the majority are calling about their child as the victim of bullying. We do not collect detailed information about the bully, just age and gender if they are known.

## 5.1 Age of child causing concern

As one would expect, bullying becomes a concern as children attend school, and increases at the age of 7, peaking at ages 10-12, which coincides with a transition to secondary school. We have some concerns that children as young as three can be labelled bullies, because developmentally they are too young to acquire such a label, and might be helped more by being helped to manage what is actually aggressive and inappropriate behaviour (Monk and Smith 2006).

**Table 1: Age of children causing concern in calls to Parentline about bullying  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Ages of children	% of long calls concerning bullying (n=706)
0-3	2
4-6	13
7-9	21
10-12	31
13-15	24
16-18	6
19-21	2
22-25	<1
26 and over	<1



## 5.2 Gender

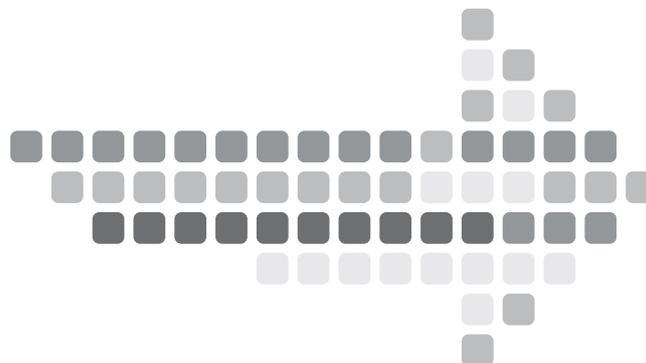
Boys and girls were equally likely to be involved in bullying (boys 50.3% and girls 49.7%), but at slightly different ages. The 706 calls that have been analysed concerned 806 children because some calls referred to more than one child.

**Table 2: Ages and gender of children causing concern in calls to Parentline about bullying April 2008 – September 2008**

Ages	% of all females (n=400)	% of all males (n=406)
0-3	2	2
4-6	11	14
7-9	19	23
10-12	27	34
13-15	31	17
16-18	6	6
19-21	2	2
22-25	0	1
26 and over	1	0
Not known	1	1

The age differences may reflect the slightly different child development trajectories taken by girls and boys (Martino et al 2007). However, there are real differences in the form that bullying takes according to gender. Boys are much more likely to be involved in physical aggression and violence, while girls are more likely to be involved in name calling, or isolation. Parentline Plus' own research from 2006, *Girls and Bullying: the experiences of parents*, Pellegrini and Bartini's 2001 paper and the forthcoming book from Field et al (due May 2009) highlight these gendered differences and demonstrate that gendered bullying crosses other sub-divisions of society such as ethnicity, nationality and socioeconomic status.

The data also reveal that ethnicity and class play a part: the motivation for bullying and/or the wherewithal to bully in some ways are of course a feature of ethnicity or class.



### 5.3 Class

Perhaps one possible advantage of the digital divide is that children of very low incomes are not involved in cyber bullying, whilst children of families with above average income are more likely to experience it. Bullying is an experience which cuts right across class.

**Table 3: Income of Parentline callers concerned about bullying  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Household income	All long calls to Parentline % (n= 18,321)	Calls concerning bullying % (n=706)	Calls concerning cyber bullying % (n=30)
£0-5000	6	3	0
£5,001- £10,000	10	9	0
£10,001-£15,000	10	9	10
£15,001-£20,000	9	8	13
£20,001-£30,000	11	14	17
£30,000 +	17	22	33
Not Sure	9	10	0
Preferred not to answer	5	6	3
Not asked	23	18	10

Please note that it is not always appropriate to ask for demographic information, such as income, ethnicity, age, gender and disability, because these questions are asked at the end of a call and callers may be distressed or may need to terminate the call quickly.

### 5.4 Ethnicity

The majority of callers calling about bullying – as with the majority of the child population – self-identified as white. The table below shows that calls about children of Asian heritage are under-represented amongst those calling about bullying as with calls about other issues (i.e. they are less likely to call than their numbers in the population would indicate). Calls about bullying of black children were at a level one would predict from their numbers in the child population and calls about bullying with respect to those of mixed ethnicity – though less frequent than one would predict from their numbers in the child population – were more likely to be about bullying than other issues. However, unsurprisingly, when the bullying was racially motivated (4% of all calls where the prime concern was about bullying) they were more likely to come from an ethnic minority background.

**Table 4: Ethnic origin of callers ringing Parentline about bullying  
April 2008 – September 2008**

	% of all calls to Parentline (n= 18,321)	% of calls about bullying (n=706)	% of calls about racist bullying (n=30)	% of child population in this ethnic group (Data from 2001 Census).
Asian	4	4	19	7
Black	4	3	16	3
Mixed	1	2	13	3
Other	1	1	6	<1
White	70	77	39	86
Not known	20	12	7	

Please note some caution is needed in interpreting this data as 20% of callers were not asked about their ethnicity or the caller preferred not to give this information.

It is interesting to note that callers are more likely to give information or be asked about their ethnicity if the call is about bullying and even more so if the call is about racist bullying, even though we do not know the ethnicity of callers in 7% of calls about racist bullying. It is also interesting to know that white children are under-represented amongst those who called about racist bullying; white children are not immune from racist bullying.

## 5.5 Family background

Parents ring about bullying are more likely to come from married couple families compared to all calls to Parentline, and less likely to be a lone parent or a stepfamily. We see no association with family type and bullying from our data; if anything the data suggests that bullying is a challenge that most families experience, regardless of class, race or family type. This links with evidence of the Children's Commissioner, showing that the issue that children really want him to deal with is bullying (11 million 2006). However, it is interesting that mothers are more likely to ring about bullying; we speculate that this is because in the married couple the mother assumes the role of seeking help with concerns about children.

**Table 5: Family status of callers ringing Parentline about bullying  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Family status	% of all calls to Parentline (n=18,321)	% of all calls about bullying (n=706)
Lone father	5	2
Lone mother	44	33
Nuclear cohabiting	3	2
Nuclear married	29	53
Stepfamily	10	4
Other	9	6

**Table 6: Who is calling Parentline about bullying  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Who is calling	% of all calls to Parentline (n=18,321)	% of all calls about bullying (n=706)
Mother	75	86
Father	11	9
Other (stepparent, grandparent, aunt , uncle etc)	14	5

## 5.6 Types of bullying

Most of the bullying that parents rang about was regular (82% of the sample) and it took different forms:

Physical	37%
Verbal	52%
Isolation	8%
Cyber-bullying	3%
Extortion	<1%

And, from the parents' understanding, it took place for different reasons although in most of the calls (82%) parents did not, or could not, explain the reasons:

Racial	4%
Homophobic	1%
Disability/special needs/difference	5%
New to school	3%
Social reasons e.g. disagreements between friends	5%

## 5.7 The perpetrators

In our sample, where the perpetrator was known to the caller, those bullying ranged from 4 years old to over 50, and very worryingly 6% were adults – a mixture of teachers, older siblings, older stepsiblings and stepparents. In this context, it is important to remember that it is not unusual for children who are bullied at school to bully at home, so that any simple division of victim and perpetrator is incredibly difficult. However, it is also important to state that bullying by adults is unacceptable, and may well demonstrate to children their relative powerlessness, making it more likely that they will find opportunities to exert power by bullying others who are younger, or smaller or weaker in some way. This section includes data from parents who have called Parentline because their children have bullied others as well as parents who have called because their child has been subjected to bullying; it is not possible to separate these two categories in our statistics.

**“Ultimately it is down to the teachers to look after our children and protect them from harm, I entrusted my son to the system when he was just 5 and I would say that he has spent 70% of that being bullied and what does that say.”**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

## 5.8 Impact on children

**“My daughter has gone from a happy child who loved school, who has never been in trouble and achieved very highly to a depressed, anxious terrified child. She now hates school, I have our GP involved and the school nurse... I believe the way the school denied any bullying occurring and closing ranks is what made my daughter so afraid of school now. She has no trust of teachers anymore.”**

**Parentline Plus service user, website Q&As**

Parents ringing about bullying also had serious concerns about school and education (14%), about their child's behaviour (10%), about their child's emotional health (35%) and about their child's mental health (9%). This concern about the mental and emotional health of children and young people has been well documented in research about bullying such as Damiani 2006 and Kevorkian 2006.

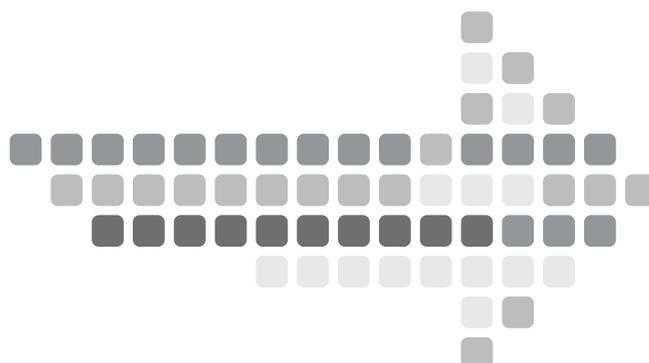
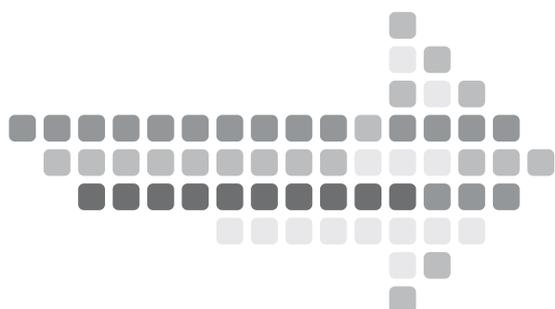
## 5.9 Emotional and mental health concerns

The data below reveals the damage done by bullying to children. We compared calls where bullying and emotional health were jointly the prime reasons for calling, which represented 35% of all calls with bullying as their primary reason. We found that there was often a web of issues and symptoms that had been noticed and reported by parents which led to some double reporting, for example a child might be stressed and confused.

**Table 7: Concerns about children’s emotional health as recorded in calls to Parentline April 2008 – September 2008**

Issue	% of calls where bullying and emotional health were jointly prime reasons (n=246)	% of all calls where the prime reason was emotional health (bullying not mentioned) (n=3335)
Stress	77	49
Confused	22	23
Isolated	30	8
Low self-esteem	44	15
Fearful	45	14
Withdrawn	30	11
Grieving	2	5
Angry	29	51

Children affected by bullying are stressed, isolated, fearful, withdrawn, and have low self-esteem. These are serious difficulties that can impair their development now and in the future. And there are also serious mental health concerns: children affected by bullying experience panic attacks, and express suicidal feelings or attempt suicide; they are also clinically depressed (mental health featured in 9% of calls about bullying). No wonder parents are beside themselves with worry.



**Table 8: Concerns about children’s mental health as recorded in calls to Parentline  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Issue	% of calls where children’s mental health and bullying were jointly prime reasons (n=62)	% of calls where children’s mental health is the prime reason for calling (bullying not mentioned) (n=1193)
Depression: not identified by a health professional	42	23
Depression: identified by a health professional	24	17
Panic attacks	16	5
Self-harm	18	23
Suicide: feelings expressed/ attempted	34	18
Eating disorder	0	7
OCD	0	5
ADHD: identified by a health professional	5	10
ADHD: not identified by a health professional	5	7

**“I am struggling to get myself heard, my son has gone through hell from both pupils and staff, he has even told me he wishes he were dead.”**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

## **5.10 School and education concerns**

We compared calls to Parentline about schooling and education concerns where bullying is not an issue with calls when it is an issue. The differences show that:

- Concerns about primary schools are more likely if bullying is a concern
- Children are more likely to be refusing to go to school

**“The Head came to our home to see my daughter and talked her into going back to school for 2 hours a day. We were told about this room she would go into to work and I (mum) was allowed to go with her. Little did we know that this was the same room where the boy got sent who bullied her when the teachers couldn’t handle him. I was told that the bully wasn’t allowed in the block where my daughter was to attend until one day when he turned up, my daughter ran out terrified, she ended up in hospital with palpitations and I never took her back. My daughter ended up leaving school two years early... She is now 17 years old and is seeing a psychiatrist, she won’t leave the house unless me or her father take her.”**

**Mother, web survey for 11 million**

- Parents’ overwhelming concern is for the safety and wellbeing of their children, in order that they can benefit from school. This is understandably their focus when ringing Parentline about bullying concerns.

**“As a parent I want to make sure that my child is in safe hands and that my taxpayers’ money is not being wasted because if I have to keep him home I will because I will not tolerate him being upset and scared of telling the teachers.”**

**Mother, web survey for 11 million**

- Exam stress and school and homework are less likely to feature as reasons for calling when bullying is the concern presumably because parents are focused on keeping their child safe and stopping the bullying above school work. Root 2006 sums up the consensus view thus: ‘Children suffering anxiety due to bullying cannot learn, and therefore anti-bullying work makes an important contribution towards the school’s overall aims’.

**“I couldn’t help my son with the school. I haven’t a clue how to make this work.”**

**Parentline call sheet: child out of school for 6 months on advice of GP and school counsellor and getting some home tuition**

**“My daughter was subjected to mental torment at her last school. I’d complained a few times nothing was done about it so I withdrew her from the school. They told me I could take her into school and she could have lessons on her own in a class room for an hour a day. At the time myself and my daughters were being verbally abused by local children every time we walked down the street... Education Welfare knew of our circumstances but no help was given... I took it upon myself to find a new school and a new home for us to live in... My daughters are very happy in their new schools.”**

**Mother, web survey for 11 million**

**Table 9: Concerns about schools and education in calls to Parentline  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Location	% of calls where school and education are a prime concern together with bullying (n=102)	% of calls where school and education a prime concern (bullying not mentioned) (n=990)
Nursery school	3	3
Primary school	40	27
Secondary	51	60
Not known	6	10
Issue may total to more than 100% due to complexity of issues		
Truanting	5	13
Child not attending with parental consent	9	5
Excluded	11	14
Refusing to go	30	23
Exam stress	4	10
School and homework	6	12
Moving school	8	8
Other	39	38

We explored the ‘other’ issues in calls concerning bullying. These included many instances of parents reporting that their child’s teacher was bullying them (in 8 comments in the free text box on callsheets out of a possible 37 comments), as well as parents feeling that they cannot relate to the school, get the school to sort out the problem or take them or their child seriously. In this context, Parentline Plus provides basic information about the steps that parents should take, and signposts callers who need it to the Advisory Centre for Education, <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/> who can provide specific legal advice on how to ensure that the school takes the issue seriously.

**"I contacted Parentline Plus they suggested a diary. I kept a diary proving that it was not him, this helped... They took me seriously and monitored."**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

It is likely that parents ring Parentline when and if they cannot get any satisfaction from the school, or if they feel unable to talk to the school. When schools do not deal effectively with the problem, parents lack of trust in schools grows. This is problematic for their child's future in school, and schools really do need to reach out to build and rebuild the relationships.

**"These people teachers and welfare officers obviously haven't got any idea to see wot a child goes through and how it also affects the rest of the family. I unfortunately have a very bad attitude towards these people now they didn't do enough to help us and even though a year on I still have dreams about these bullies so if it affected me this way how do you think it affected my children."**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

**"I followed all the correct procedures and wrote to the board of governors. I was told by the reception that my letter was passed on. I have never received acknowledgement by telephone that my complaint was being dealt with nor have I ever had a letter back from the board of governors."**

**Parentline Plus web survey comment**

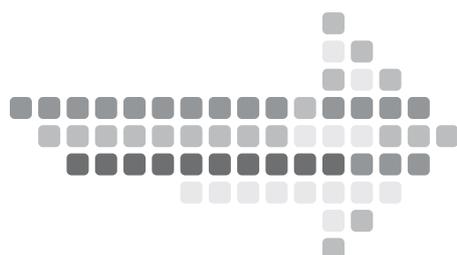
## **5.11 Behaviour concerns**

We compared calls about bullying and behaviour with calls where behaviour alone was the reason for calling. Children's behaviour always features as the top parental concern about their children to the extent that Parentline Plus has recently published a report on aggressive behaviour by children towards their parents and other family members (Parentline Plus 2008). There are some striking differences between concerns about behaviour in general and behaviour in relation to bullying:

- The location of the problematic behaviour is much more likely to be at school than at home when bullying features
- Physical aggression is more likely with bullying
- Peer pressure is more likely with bullying

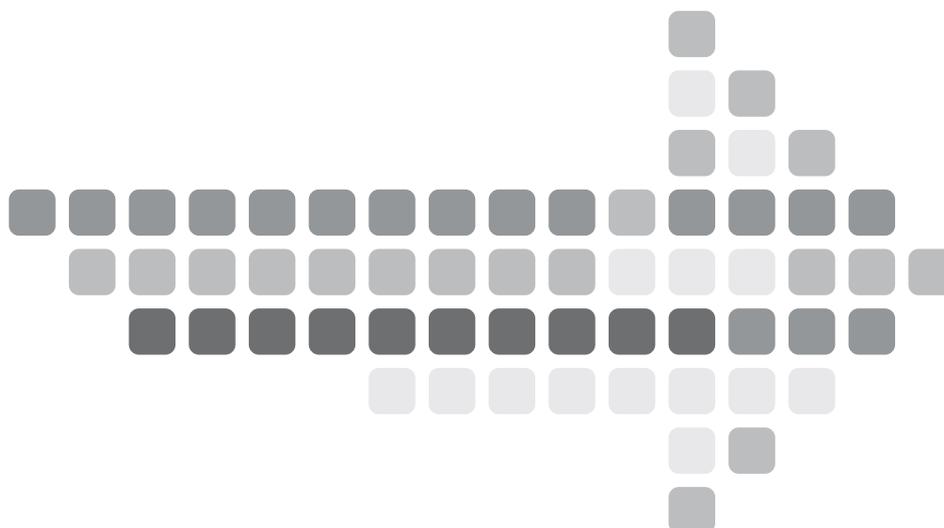
All these of course are classic features of bullying.

The table below also reveals a range of problematic behaviours that parents are struggling with; when bullying is also a prime concern the impact on the parents and family of these multiple challenging issues is of course very serious.



**Table 10: Concerns about behaviour in calls to Parentline  
April 2008 – September 2008**

Issue	% of calls where behaviour is a prime reason for calling as well as bullying as a prime reason (n=68)	% of calls where behaviour as the prime reason for calling (bullying not mentioned) (n=5116)
<b>Location</b> may add up to more than 100% due to behaviour happening in more than one location:		
Home	72	88
School	38	19
Other location e.g. bus stop, park, sports club	7	11
<b>Type of behaviour</b> may add up to more than 100% due to more than one type of behaviour causing concern		
Physical aggression	43	30
Verbal aggression	59	60
Lying	18	18
Stealing	13	14
Smoking	7	8
Drug use	10	12
Alcohol use	9	11
Wanting to leave home	7	10
Staying away from home	10	18
Running away	6	5
Bad crowd	15	16
Peer pressure	10	8
Internet misuse	3	3

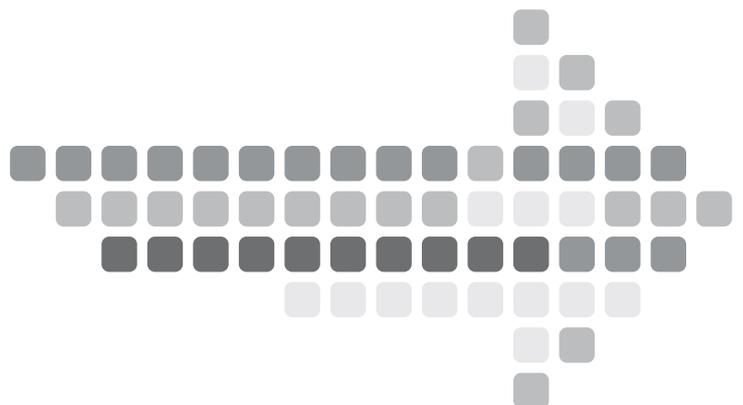
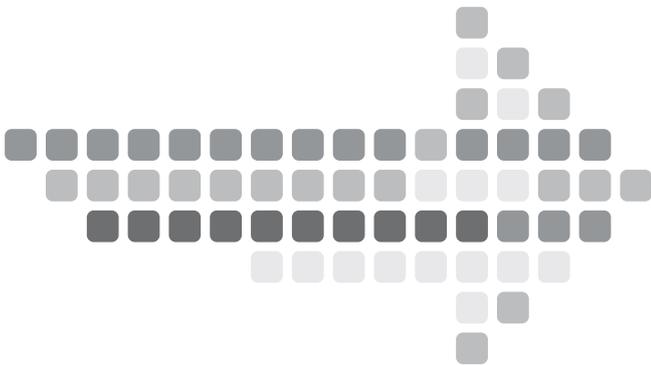


## 6. Conclusion

What is clear from this report is that parents across all sectors of society are concerned about bullying and the impact that it has on their children. Parents who call us about bullying are often having to deal with a web of difficult issues including challenging behaviour and the emotional health of their children, but also issues concerning school life or less specific stresses.

Parents have told us that most bullying occurs in schools and while many schools are working well to stop bullying there is still much that needs to be done, especially in engaging parents who are having to deal with bullying, whether as the parent of the bully or as the parent of the victim. Where schools are working effectively, parents are coping well but many callers have told us that they have not been listened to and that professionals have not understood the complexity of issues that they are facing.

Building a relationship of mutual respect and trust at an early stage in a child's time at school will help both the parents and the school staff to support children better and enable them to make the most of their time at school. The effects of a poor relationship can damage the future life chances for children and prevent their families from seeking help with other issues; a secure working relationship between parents and schools will assist all the adults to work together should any difficulties arise.



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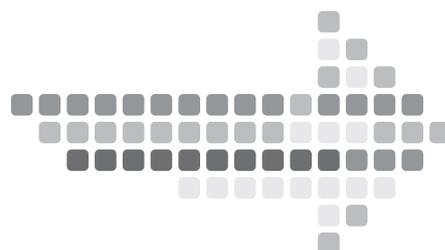
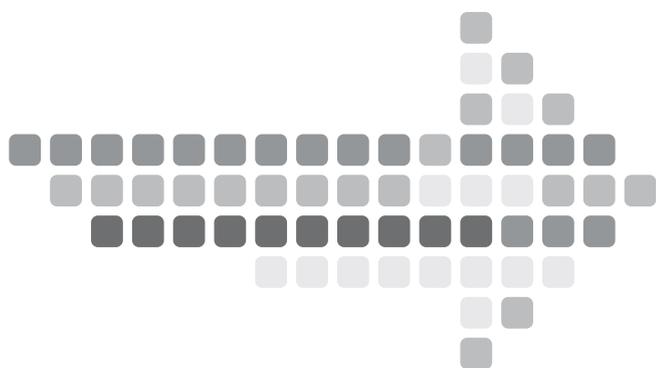
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# Tips and hints

Drawn up after consultation with Parentline Plus' service users.

## **What to do if you think your child is being bullied or is bullying:**

- Visit Parentline Plus' new website [www.besomeonetotell.org.uk](http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk) for parents who are concerned about bullying in their child's life, both outside and within school. It has been designed to help you support your child build healthy friendships and be safe at every stage of their life. Whether your child is getting bullied or bullying others, we are here to help.
- Listen and talk to them. They may feel out of control and ashamed – whether they are being bullied or bullying. Let them know you love them and want to help.
- Be clear that it is important for the bullying to stop and that the school will need to be involved.
- If your child is bullying others, think about what might be behind it – are they trying to get attention or fit in with the crowd, or are they unaware of how they are hurting others? Are they bullying because they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying at home or elsewhere?
- Talk to the school as soon as possible. Try to stay calm when you talk to the teachers – it helps to write down what you know and what the school says to you about what they are going to do. If you feel you may not stay calm consider going with a friend to support you.
- Encourage your child to keep a journal in which they record each incident of bullying. They could also draw pictures or write about the bullying – this can help to release painful feelings and will be a record of what happened and when it happened.
- If you think things are not getting better, ask to see the school's anti-bullying policy and make an appointment to see the headteacher.
- Take care of yourself. Coping with your child's bullying may be very stressful – especially if it brings back memories of your own experiences. Try to take time for yourself or talk over what you feel with friends or family.



# Want to find out more?

If you need someone to talk to, phone Parentline free\* on 0808 800 2222 or the free textphone on 0800 783 6783 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment. For email support contact us at [parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk)

\* Free from landlines and most mobile networks.

Parentline Plus produces information and materials on a range of parenting issues.

- Check out [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)
- Try our new website for parents concerned about bullying [www.besomeonetotell.org.uk](http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk)
- An online one-stop shop for professionals [www.parentlineplusforprofessionals.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplusforprofessionals.org.uk)
- A social networking site for parents of teenagers [www.gotateenager.org.uk](http://www.gotateenager.org.uk)

## Other sources of information

### Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Independent advice and information for parents on all matters concerning schools, including bullying.  
Advice line 0808 800 5793  
[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

### Anti-Bullying Alliance

The website provides information and advice for parents, children and schools on tackling bullying.  
[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

### Beat bullying

UK bullying prevention charity, working to create a world where bullying is unacceptable.  
[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)

### Bullying UK

Useful information and links for parents and children on how to deal with all types of bullying, including cyberbullying.  
[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

### Children's Legal Centre

Advice and information on legal issues affecting a child. You can obtain a copy of the booklet, 'Bullying: a guide to the Law', from their website.  
Email [clc@essex.ac.uk](mailto:clc@essex.ac.uk)  
[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

### ChildLine

Sometimes your child may want to talk to someone completely different from you or the school. ChildLine offers free and confidential support to kids ringing about bullying. Make sure your child knows the ChildLine number and website address.  
Freephone: 0800 11 11  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **Childnet International**

Information, advice, resources for children, parents and schools on getting the most out of new technology, and safe and responsible use.

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

### **Contact a family**

UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children.

Helpline: 0808 808 3555

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

### **Department for Children, Schools and Families**

The website provides information and advice for parents, children and schools.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bullying/)

### **Direct Gov**

Information and support for children being cyberbullied as well as those doing the bullying.

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying>

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Helpline: 0845 604 6610

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

### **Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**

Dedicated to supporting parents and their gay, lesbian and bisexual sons and daughters.

0845 652 0311

[www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)

### **Kidscape**

Information and help for children who are being bullied, and a helpline for parents of bullied children.

Helpline: 08451 205 204

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Mencap**

UK charity for people with a learning disability and their families.

Helpline: 0808 808 1111

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **Multikulti**

Provides information, advice, guidance and learning materials in community languages. Has specific information on racially and religiously motivated abuse.

[www.multikulti.org.uk/en/racism-discrimination/racially-and-religiously-motivated-attacks/](http://www.multikulti.org.uk/en/racism-discrimination/racially-and-religiously-motivated-attacks/)

### **ParentsCentre**

Information and support for parents on how to help with your child's learning, including advice on bullying.

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

### **Schools Out**

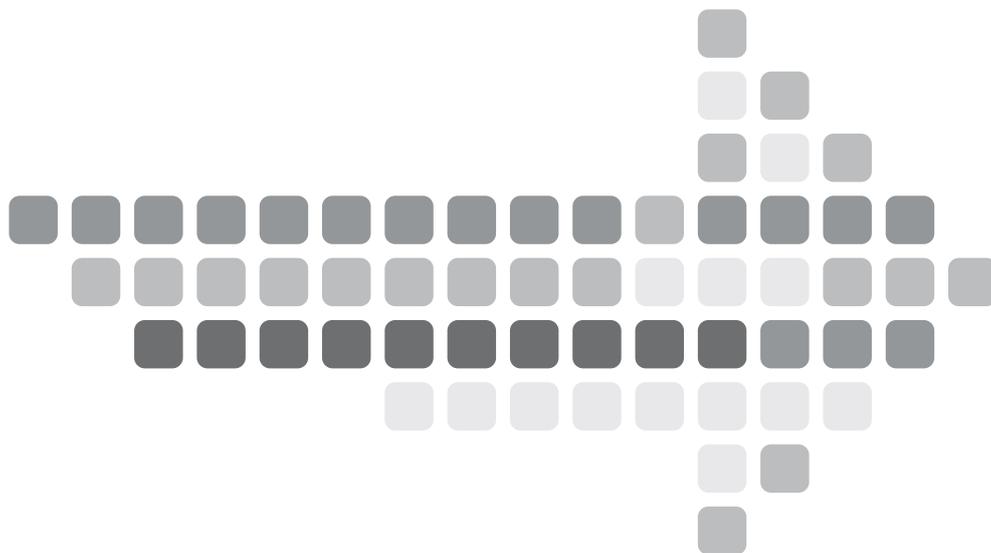
Provides a support network to raise the issue of homophobia and heterosexism in education.

[www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)

## Stonewall

Working for positive change for gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the UK, with an education programme: Education for All.

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)



Parentline Plus is a national charity and a leading organisation in the development and delivery of support for parents and families. We work to recognise and to value the different types of families that exist and to shape and expand the services available to them. We understand that it is not possible to separate children's needs from the needs of their parents and carers and encourage people to see it as a sign of strength to seek help. We believe it is normal for all parents to have difficulties from time to time.



**Parentline Plus:**

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\*Free from landlines and most mobile networks.