What is bullying?

Bullying is the ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour that causes physical or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

What is a bystander?

In any bullying situation there is usually the person being bullied, the person bullying and 'bystanders' (other people who watch or are nearby at the time the bullying takes place).

You may have been a bystander if you have:

- cheered the person bullying
- stood and watched in silence
- laughed or walked away from the situation
- forwarded an offensive image, post or text message to someone
- said something to the person bullying to stop.

If bystanders are confident to take safe and effective action there is a greater possibility that the bullying will stop. An active bystander will use words and/or actions that can help someone who is being bullied.