What is bullying?

Bullying is when one person (or a group of people) with more power than someone else tries to upset or hurt them. This power can come from being more popular, stronger or part of the group. They might repeatedly try to hurt them physically, socially isolate them, or say and do mean or humiliating things to them.

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

Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious or hidden.

If someone behaves in a mean or aggressive way on one occasion it isn’t bullying, even though it is not respectful or acceptable. A fight or disagreement between two people of equal power or status isn’t bullying.

Bullying is not OK. It feels awful. You feel like you can’t stop it. You have the right to feel safe.

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.