

Prevent bullying at YOUR child's school and after-school centre.

Dear Parent,

This letter contains five constructive tips on how you as a parent can help to promote wellbeing at your child's school – and so prevent bullying.

These five tips are part of the Free of Bullying anti-bullying initiative being run by the Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark. Free of Bullying is based on four fundamental values: tolerance, respect, care and courage. The anti-bullying initiative comprises a suitcase which contains tools and methods that can be used to help prevent bullying among children in Years 0 to 2.

Three target groups that have to work together

Free of Bullying has three target groups: children, parents and professionals. To prevent bullying, these three target groups all have to work together to create good groups of children that are based on a culture of "room for everyone".

The Free of Bullying project gives children the tools they need to deal with teasing and stand up for themselves if they are being teased, and if they see other people being teased.

Parental input is also an important element of the initiative, because parents also hold some responsibility for preventing bullying. You can do this by backing up the wellbeing of children and the sense of community among groups of children so that nobody feels left out.

Creating a sense of community among children is also the focal point of Free of Bullying as regards the professionals who spend their working lives with the children at school and after-school centres. This material will inspire teachers and classroom assistants to implement activities which reinforce the sense of community felt by the children.

Free of Bullying helps you to do your best as a parent to ensure that no child – your own, or other people's – finds out what it feels like to be bullied.

Best regards,
Free of Bullying

Five tips for parents

1 Help your child to arrange to play with lots of children in his or her class – both in school and at other times. Your child can learn from playing with lots of different children. At the same time, you can help to make sure that all children have someone to play with – and hence a place in the community.

2 Do not say bad things about other children in your child's class, their parents, teachers or classroom assistants. Saying negative things about other children and adults can easily turn into hostility towards them. Instead, help your child to maintain a positive and open attitude towards everyone. For instance, do you say "hi" to all the children and adults you see when you drop off and pick up your child? Do you know the names of all your child's friends?

3 Introduce a social policy for birthdays. Birthdays mean a lot to children and are important to both the birthday boy or girl and their guests. Any child who is not invited will feel sad. And so will any child whose guests fail to turn up. Discuss a social policy for birthdays at your next parents' evening.

4 Encourage your child to stand up for him/herself and defend his/her friends. Children who are outside the group need a helping hand and an invitation from a friend. Children who can stand up for themselves and are good at helping, consoling and defending others "grow" well both inside and out.

5 Be open and positive when other parents tell you about their children's problems. It is very hard for people to speak up and tell people that their child is upset about something or is having problems at school and needs play-dates or friends, for example. Things are made easier for them if other parents are receptive to their needs.