

# Beat the bullies

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There are so many forms of bullying that most of us are completely unfamiliar with. If you think your child is being bullied, read our handy tips on what to do to stop bullies in their tracks.

Although the most likely form, bullying does not just consist of picking on someone physically or even verbally. Bullying can also occur in the form of sexual abuse, emotional abuse, cyber abuse and peer pressure, to name just a few.

According to anti-bullying organisation, Whistle Blowers, a 2012 UNISA survey revealed that 55% of school children had been bullied at school. Which is enough to keep any parent up at night. Consumer Insights Company Pondering Panda recently released a study showing that two out of three South African learners are worried about being bullied at school. For 52% of those learners, bullying meant teasing and insults while, for 26%, it included pushing, hitting and beatings.

The good news is that there's a lot of advice out there about how to deal with bullying. With websites like [selfesteem.dove.co.za](http://selfesteem.dove.co.za), [teenworx.co.za](http://teenworx.co.za) and many more, you can read up on everything from the signs that a child is being bullied, to how to respond to bullying, both as a child and as a parent.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

## Victims of bullying:

- Report any bullying incidents to the authorities, whether it's a parent, your principal or in more extreme cases, the police.
- Connect with other people who have been or are being bullied. Realising that you're not alone can make a huge difference.
- Remind yourself that it's not your fault; bullies will pick on anyone. It's because of their own issues, not yours.
- Don't isolate yourself from the world. That gives the bully more power than they deserve.

## Parents of victims:

- Listen to what your child has to say and remain neutral. Don't overreact to what they're telling you as this may make them feel worse about their situation and they could shy away from you.
- Don't immediately get involved with the bully or his family. First think of ways to help your child through advice, rather than through actions.
- Seek advice of your own, then coach your child on how to react to the bully.
- Find a teacher or administrator at your child's school who is able to help.

**Remember to always take your child's side**

<http://www.essentials.co.za/lifestyle/beat-the-bullies>