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# Why Bullying Hurts and How to Stop It

**KS3 CITIZENSHIP** Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

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## What is Bullying?

**Bullying** is when someone repeatedly hurts, threatens, or excludes another person on purpose. It can happen in person at school, online through **cyberbullying**, or through spreading nasty rumours. The key word is *repeated* — a single argument isn't bullying, but targeting someone again and again is.

## Why Does Bullying Cause Real Harm?

**Bullying damages both your mind and body.** When someone is bullied, their brain releases stress chemicals that make them feel anxious, scared, or sad. Over time, this can lead to depression, sleep problems, and even physical illness like headaches and stomach pain.

Think of it like a plant being trampled every day — at first it bends, but if it keeps happening, the plant stops growing and eventually dies.

Bullying also damages **self-esteem** and confidence. People who are bullied often start believing the mean things said about them, which makes it harder for them to do well in school or make friends. In serious cases, it can lead to self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

## The Bully's Side of the Story

Understanding why someone bullies helps us stop it. Often, bullies are dealing with their own unhappiness — maybe they're struggling at home, feeling powerless, or copying behaviour they've seen. This doesn't excuse bullying, but it helps us respond with more wisdom than just anger back.

## What Can You Do?

**If you're being bullied:** Tell a trusted adult immediately — a parent, teacher, or school counsellor. Keep a record of what happened, when, and who saw it. Don't blame yourself. You deserve support.

**If you see bullying happening:** Be an **upstander**, not a bystander. This means standing up against it safely. You could tell a teacher, comfort the person being bullied afterwards, or refuse to laugh at mean jokes. Small actions matter.

**If you've bullied someone:** Recognise it and apologise genuinely. Ask yourself why you did it, and commit to change. Most schools have support to help you understand your behaviour.

Think of it like being part of a team — everyone has a job in making your school a safe place for everyone.