
We Are Not Saying that there's no such thing as bullying!

There is, and sometimes, the kind of everyday 'mean' behaviour described in this leaflet can, if it becomes prolonged or persistent tip over into bullying behaviour.

There are times, however, when we need to think carefully before we jump to conclusions. It is often the case that a calm and thoughtful reaction can help children work through the small problems, build resilience and deal with the bigger problems more ably when they do arise.

If you do feel your child is being bullied or abused please contact us and we will work with all parties to resolve it.

Useful Documents

- Our Pastoral Care Policy (which includes our Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Child Protection Policies) can be viewed online at www.forgeips.co.uk/documents
- This leaflet was inspired by an article Ms Mahon read by a teacher called Patty Shade at Bergamo Montessori Schools, Sacramento, California. The original article can be viewed at www.BergamoSchools.com



Last updated & distributed:

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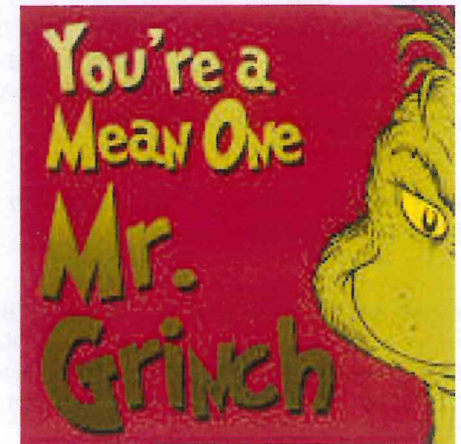
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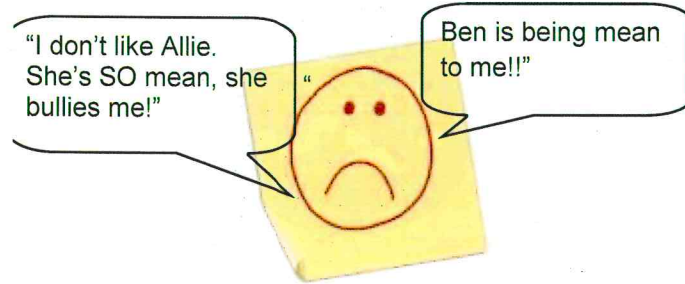


Forge Integrated Primary School



7 Tips for Helping Children Deal with Life's Mean Moments

A Mean World.....



Complaints like this are common in primary schools. And, it's likely that, at one time or another, you have heard something similar from your own child.

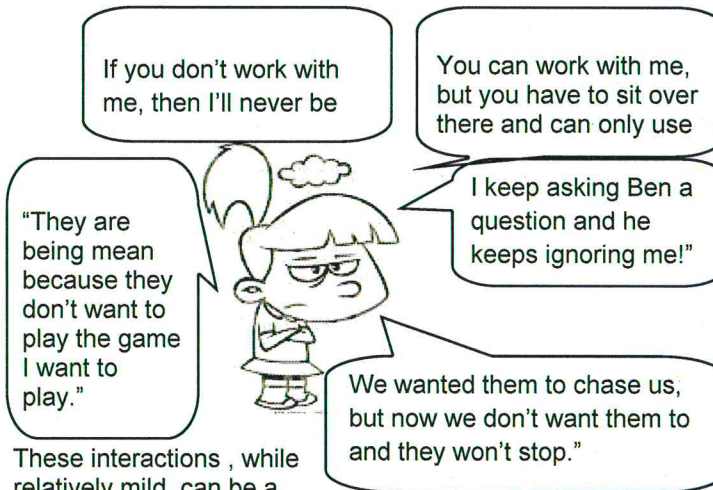
It's heartbreaking to see our children upset. And, while it's important that we listen to our children, take their concerns seriously and be the best advocate for them, it is also important to take their development into consideration when deciding what action to take.

Growing up isn't easy. There's a lot to learn and we often overlook just how complicated social skills are.

Often, when we ask our child what happened, we may not get much of an explanation. We might get, "Well, Katie is just so mean!" Your child might add that he or she was pushed or yelled at – but often you'll only hear that a certain someone is "ALWAYS mean to me!"

But, what does "mean" or 'bullying' mean to a young child? Typically, it means "I interacted with someone and it made me feel bad." This is often light-years away from abuse or bullying, yet can feel just as upsetting to your child — especially as she or he is learning to navigate the world of social interaction.

Here are just a few examples of situations that a child might label as meanness or bullying...



These interactions, while relatively mild, can be a big deal to a young child, so how can you help your child through this phase of social development?

Food for Thought...

When you get a complaint about meanness, don't be alarmed. Chances are, the event was less earth-shattering than it sounds. It may also have already been worked through during the school day and your child simply wants to talk it through with you.

Think about your own daily gripes and groans. Most of us complain about the things that upset us to the people we are closest to. Often, we just want to talk things through with someone we know will listen and who cares about us. We may not actually want that person to do anything; we want to find our own way through but need to express the discomfort we feel and perhaps have some help to make sense of it.

Social interaction is a regular feature of the classroom and playground, so these social encounters are everyday occurrences. Perhaps we should look at them as not always being problems. They can also be natural and helpful opportunities to learn about the use (and abuse) of power and desire. With time and support children can learn not just to cope with these situations, but to analyze them and learn how to diffuse them. This takes time and patience on the part of teachers and parents but it is a life skill as important to your child's success as maths or reading!

7 suggestions to help your child & you through these social difficulties...

1. Know that you are your child's "soft place to land". Issues that came up during the day may resurface – especially at bedtime. Listen carefully and reassure them that they can handle future difficulties that come their way.
2. Listen to your child without showing judgment or fear. Your child will look to you for cues about the importance of an incident. An emotional reaction may interfere with their ability to work it through themselves or cause them to second-guess their resolution.
3. Remind your child to talk to his or her teacher. Although this sounds obvious, there have been times when we hear from parents about problems that have never been brought to our attention — either by our own observations or by the child.
4. Remember that you are only hearing your child's perspective of the conflict and the details will always be coloured by their personal desires, wishes and point of view. Talk with the teacher. Details about the conflict from his or her perspective and information about how it was addressed can help you talk through the problem with your child.
5. Teach your child that conflict is part of life. Our wishes and desires may not be the same as others. The concept of "not getting what you want" can be VERY difficult for children at this age, but is crucial to their success in the future.
6. If a problem continues, continue to communicate and work with the teacher to find a solution. Remember that it can take time to solve complex social issues with children.
7. The years of practice that your child will get through a socially diverse and inclusive education where learning to handle social interaction is part of the program — along with your loving support, will reap rewards in your child's future.