

# INFORMATION ON BULLYING AT SCHOOL

This guide is for parents who do not speak Finnish, Swedish or Sami as their first language but understand some English. This guide will give you information about bullying, harassment and discrimination. It will also tell you how to intervene if they occur.



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According to research, children with a foreign background experience more bullying and physical abuse at school than others. Young people with foreign background or who were born abroad and now live in Finland are more prone to loneliness and more likely to be threatened with violence than their peer groups. It is also more difficult for them to get access to services meant for students. Youth born abroad are bullied particularly much.

Source: Ministry of Justice, Harassment is Discrimination 1/2018 | [yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/policy-brief-series](http://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/policy-brief-series)

**Bullying** is mean behavior when it happens constantly. Examples of bullying are pushing, hitting, name-calling and mocking. It can also happen by means of shutting out, spreading mean rumours or anything that is intended to hurt or insult. Bullying means that the one being bullied is not included in the activities of a class, a group or a virtual discussion group.

Bullying is often a crime.

For example defamation, threat and assault are crimes that are often linked to bullying. According to law, to cheer on and help the bully are also crimes.

Source: Mannerheim Association for Child Welfare  
[www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare](http://www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare)

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**Harassment** is to create an unpleasant or hostile situation for another person by uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. Harassment can be spreading rumours, insulting or putting a person down in order to offend them. If harassment is motivated by skin colour, nationality, religion or another personal characteristic, it is regarded as discrimination.

Source: [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harassment](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harassment)

**Discrimination** means that a person is treated worse than others because of their personal traits. It is against the law to discriminate against people for reasons such as:

- age
- origin
- citizenship
- language
- religion
- belief
- sexual orientation
- other personal reason.

Source: Non-Discrimination Ombudsman [www.syrjinta.fi/web/en](http://www.syrjinta.fi/web/en)

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Every school has a duty to make an **equality plan**. According to the Equality Act (Article 6), the school must think about how to act so that no one is bullied, discriminated against or harassed at school. The school must act if equality is not reached at school.

Source: Finnish National Agency for Education [www.oph.fi/en](http://www.oph.fi/en)

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## How can you intervene in bullying?

You can tell your child what they can do themselves:

“My child, if you see or experience bullying, tell the bully that you do not accept it. Do not be silent. Do not go away or act as if you do not see anything. If talking to the bully does not work, tell another person. Tell your teacher, the principal, your friend, or us parents at home. If you are not able to tell about it at school or do not want to, ask your parents, siblings or friends to do it. The teacher or some other school worker will tell the principal. You can also report bullying by sending an email or message by Wilma to the teacher or the principal. Bullying, discrimination and harassment should always be reported, even if you are not the target. It is important to tell about bullying, because the one who was bullied does not always tell personally what has happened.”

Source: Viikki Normal School Equality plan [www.helsinki.fi/en](http://www.helsinki.fi/en)

## What you can do as a parent

- Examine the issue first. Listen to your child, but do not believe them automatically.
- Discuss it calmly with your child and school and rationalize your opinion.
- The school can organize a discussion with the bully and his/her parents.
- Discussion is often the way to resolve the situation and stop the bullying.
- Take care of maintaining the trust between you and school.
- Tell your child that you support them as parents.

## Tip!

Hobby groups outside of school can provide friends for your child!  
More things you can do: Mannerheim League for Child Welfare  
[www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare](http://www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare)  
[www.verywellfamily.com/ways-to-prevent-school-bullying-460755](http://www.verywellfamily.com/ways-to-prevent-school-bullying-460755)

## How can you act to stop discrimination?

You can contact the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman if a child, teacher or other staff member has bullied your child because of skin colour, religion, language or some other personal feature.  
[www.syrjinta.fi/web/en](http://www.syrjinta.fi/web/en)

Violent crimes should be reported directly to the police.  
If your child has been abused, such as beaten or kicked, tell the police directly.  
[www.poliisi.fi/en](http://www.poliisi.fi/en)



**Kymsote**

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