



HOPE Newsletter - Issue 85

TWELVE WAYS TO BEAT BULLIES

This week the Daily Mirror's Beat the Bullies campaign, backed by X-Factor judge Simon Cowell, has been looking at ways to eradicate the problem.

IT'S an ugly, cruel and unnecessary part of school life and is a source of misery for millions of children.

More than two million youngsters are bullied at some point in their school years. Of these, 40 per cent suffer bullying twice a week or more.

Childline receives about 20,000 calls a year from bullied youngsters while the charity Kidscape gets about 16,000 phone calls from the worried parents of bullied children.

One in 12 youngsters are bullied so badly that it affects their education, relationships and even their job prospects in later life.

And in 10 to 15 cases every year the bullying reaches such a dreadful level that it drives its young victims to suicide.

This week the Daily Mirror's Beat the Bullies campaign, backed by X-Factor judge Simon Cowell, has been looking at ways to eradicate the problem.

Today we offer 12 practical ideas for youngsters to deter bullies, plus five tips from children who have experienced, keep themselves safe and boost their confidence.

These clever methods are taught on special courses for bullied children run by Kidscape, the only national charity dedicated to beating bullying:

1 - BY law, schools must have a way of dealing with bullying. Use your school's anti-bullying policy to get help and if you're not sure how it works, talk to your teacher or head teacher.

Don't become resigned to being a victim. You CAN help yourself and get others to help you.

2 - TELL a friend what is happening. It will be harder for the bully to pick on you if you have a pal with you for support.

3 - TRY to ignore the bully or say "No!" really firmly, then walk away.

Don't worry if people think you are running away - it is very hard for the bully to go on picking on someone who won't stand still to listen to their threats.

4 - MOST bullied children have negative body language - hunched up and looking at the floor. Try to stand straight and make eye contact with people.

5 - IF you don't want to do something, don't give in to pressure. Be firm. Remember, everyone has the right to say no.

6 - SIMPLY repeat a statement again and again: "No, you can't have my lunch money, no, you can't have my lunch money!" The bully will get bored because they are not getting anywhere and give up.

7 - MAKE your phrase short and precise: Say "It's my pencil." or "Go away" firmly.

8 - DON'T show that you are upset or angry. Bullies love to get a reaction - it's "fun". Keep calm and hide your emotions - the bully might get bored and leave you alone.

9 - MAKE up funny or clever replies in advance. They don't have to be brilliant, but it helps to have an answer ready. Practice saying them at home. If the bully says: "Give me your sweets," you could say: "OK, but my dog licked them so they don't taste very nice."

10 - AVOID being alone in places where you know the bully is likely to be. This might mean changing your route to school, or avoiding certain parts of the playground, or only using toilets when other people are there. It's not fair, but it might put the bully off. Remember, your safety is the most important thing to consider.

11 - STOP thinking like a victim. If you have been bullied for a long time, you might start to believe what the bully says - that you're ugly, awful and no one will ever like you. This is "victim-think".

12 - MAKE a list of all the good things you can think of about yourself. Talk to yourself in a positive way. Say: "I may not look like a film star, but I'm good at math and have a brilliant sense of humor."

PRACTICE "walking tall". Bullies pick on people they think are weak. If you look confident, the bully is less likely to pick on you.

STICK with a group - even if they are not really your friends. Bullies tend to pick on people when they are on their own.

KEEP a diary about what is happening. A written record of the bullying makes it much easier to prove what has been going on.

DON'T fight back if you can help it. You could make the situation worse, get hurt or even be blamed for starting the trouble.

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