

**#FREETHE
SHOULDERS**

PARENT/CARER GUIDE

This resource is for parents/carers who may be worried their child is experiencing bullying behaviour because of dandruff.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT YOUR CHILD IS NOT ALONE

1 of 5 teenagers experience bullying behaviour and those with dandruff are twice as likely to be among them. Dandruff is a completely normal skin condition that affects 1 in 2 of us and it is treatable; yet, like so many other things, because of misconceptions and stigma, it is often a source of bullying behaviour. No matter the reason, bullying behaviour should never be accepted. From research, we know that bullying behaviour can have a life-long impact on young people's mental health but there are things you as a parent/carer can do to support your child/ward.

HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS:

1. START A CONVERSATION

Start an open and honest conversation by checking in and asking how they are feeling. Ask open-ended questions about their experiences and if they are experiencing bullying behaviour at school. It's important to listen without any expectations and give them your full attention; practice active listening by repeating back what they have said to confirm your understanding and let them take their time to share with you how they are feeling.

2. OFFER REASSURANCE

Offer reassurance that dandruff is very common and lots of young people have it. Discuss together some options on how you could work together to stop the bullying behaviour taking place, including speaking to the school. It is important to not try and tackle it without consulting your child/ward first, as this may make them feel angry and upset.



3. RECORD WHAT IS HAPPENING

Make a record of any bullying behaviour or incidents that your child/ward shares with you. This is really important to track what, when, where and who was involved. You can then use this record when you speak to the school about bullying behaviour.

If the bullying behaviour is taking place online, encourage your child/ward to screenshot any evidence, block the user so they can't contact them again and report the profile to the social media platform.

4. LEARN MORE ABOUT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Understanding a bit more about bullying behaviour (repeated, negative behaviour intended to make someone feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe) can make all the difference when supporting your child/ward. At The Diana Award, we use the acronym V.I.P to describe the 3 types of bullying behaviour:

VERBAL_

The repeated, negative use of speech or verbal gestures, to intentionally hurt others. Examples include hurtful words, offensive language, swearing and discriminatory language.

INDIRECT_

The repeated, negative use of actions that are neither verbal nor physical to intentionally hurt others. Examples include isolating someone, rumours, sharing secrets, damaging/ taking someone's property and intimidation.

PHYSICAL_

The repeated, negative use of body contact to intentionally hurt others. Examples include kicking, punching, pinching, slapping and tripping someone over.

5. UNDERSTAND THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Sometimes, it can be tricky to spot when a young person is experiencing bullying behaviour and, while not every young person will exhibit these signs and symptoms, it can be helpful to keep an eye out for the following behaviours:

- Excessively washing their hair
- Wearing their hood up or insisting on wearing a hat
- Always tying their hair up
- Isolation from social groups
- Being upset before or after school
- Refusal to go to school
- Defensive body language
- Hiding their phone from you
- Sudden withdrawal from social situations
- Loss of interest in hobbies/activities they previously enjoyed
- Losing items without explanation
- Change in friendship groups
- Change in behaviour (loud to quiet or quiet to loud)
- Change in mood, for example, sudden outbursts of anger or sadness



6. DON'T TACKLE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ALONE

If the bullying behaviour is taking place at school, we encourage you to get in touch with a member of the senior leadership team and the class teacher. The school should have an anti-bullying policy and have a duty of care to prevent bullying behaviour. It may be a good idea to set up a meeting on how you are going to work together to stop any more bullying behaviour happening in future.

Always ask your child/ward how they want to proceed; it's important to take this into consideration when working with the school to put an action plan into place.

FURTHER SUPPORT

Dandruff is treatable,,,

The NHS website provides top tips on how to best treat dandruff
www.nhs.uk/conditions/dandruff

THE DIANA AWARD CRISIS MESSENGER

This is a free, 24/7 crisis support service across the UK. For all young people in crisis, they can text DA to 85258. Trained volunteers will listen to how they're feeling and help them think through the next steps towards feeling better.

For more resources, head to our Resource Centre at
antibullyingpro.com/resources

THE DIANA AWARD SUPPORT CENTRE

For further organisations who may be able to support you and your child/ward, visit The Diana Award's Support Centre at antibullyingpro.com/support