

Safeguarding Snapshot - 27.03.26

Empowering the Active Bystander

Witnessing unkind behaviour can be a confusing moment for a child. Most children want to help, but they often stay quiet because they fear becoming a target or simply don't know what to do. Moving from a **passive bystander** to an **active bystander** is a powerful way to stop bullying before it escalates and ensure a safe environment for the school community.

What is an active bystander?

An active bystander isn't a "snitch" or a superhero; they are someone who recognises that a situation isn't right and chooses to take a small, safe action to support the person being mistreated.

The "4 D's"

We encourage you to discuss these four simple strategies with your child to use when they see something unkind:

- **Direct** - Speak up firmly and clearly, saying "That's not okay."
- **Distract** - Interrupt the situation by changing the subject, such as "Hey, do you know what the time is?"
- **Delegate** - Ask for help from a trusted adult. "Mr. Jones, I think someone needs help on the playground."
- **Delay** - Check in with the person after the incident. "I'm sorry that happened. Are you okay? Want to hang out?"

Tip for Parents

- **Normalise Reporting:**
Explain the difference between 'snitching' (trying to get someone *in* trouble) and telling (trying to get someone *out* of trouble). See the Vyners Student Guidance below
- **Practice Low-Stakes Scenarios:**
Role-play at home. Ask, "If you saw someone being left out at lunch, what's one small thing you could do?"
- **Validate the Fear:**
Acknowledge that it takes bravery to act. Remind them that even a small gesture, like sitting next to a lonely classmate, makes a massive difference.
- **Focus on Safety:**
Always emphasise that they should never put themselves in physical danger. If a situation feels unsafe they should delegate to an adult.

TELLING VERSUS SNITCHING

TELLING

To keep yourself or others safe

Concerns someone's safety

The problem is important and urgent

Someone is being hurt or is in danger

An adult is needed to help solve the problem

Is important



SNITCHING

To get someone else in trouble or avoid blame

Threatening to snitch on another in order to control someone else

Has something to gain from snitching

No one is in danger or being hurt

Can be solved without adult intervention

Is unimportant

Additional resources

- [Brook: How to be an active bystander.](#)
- [Antibullying Alliance: Bystanders](#)
- [Antibullying Alliance: What if I see someone being bullied?](#)