

Prevention strategies

When it comes to bullying prevention, we know from research that having supportive friends is important¹ and can be a protective factor when it comes to reducing bullying victimisation². Refugee children will often begin their journey at school with no friends so a great preventative strategy would be to encourage them to get involved in activities that build their confidence and self-esteem, and help them to form good friendships outside of school, such as through joining local clubs or groups.

You could also find out what kind of support might be available at their school, for example:

- **Peer support groups**

The school might have a peer support system, for example using 'buddy benches' or 'friendship stops' to give trained peer supporters within the school a chance to reach out to children who might need a friend.

They might have organised activities that happen in breaktimes which are led by other pupils who are 'playleaders' or 'playground buddies'.

If you find out that this is something offered at the young person's school, you could support the family in encouraging them to make use of it.

- **After school/lunchtime clubs**

You could support the family in finding out whether there are any other social opportunities on offer at their school, such as lunchtime or after school clubs which might be of interest to the young person.

Finding an activity that they can enjoy with other children could help them create positive relationships and friendships with others.

- **Language support**

¹ <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/aba-our-work/news-opinion/friendships-help-say-children-one-three-report-being-bullied-covid>

² Kendrick, K. et al (2012). The protective role of supportive friends against bullying perpetration and victimization. Journal of Adolescence, 35(4):1069-80. DOI:10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.02.014



It is possible that the school may be able to provide language support for young people with EAL (English as an Additional Language). You could assist the family in finding out whether this is something available to them.

By improving their spoken English, they will naturally improve their communication skills, which could support them in bonding with their peers and strengthening friendships. Languages should be celebrated and seen as a benefit rather than as something holding the child back.