



CYBER BULLYING

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Supporting your child to be safe and happy

October 2021

WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

“The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.”

In this leaflet Cyber bullying refers to children and young people bullying one another. If an adult is involved it is cyber harassment, stalking or potentially grooming and the police should be contacted.

CYBER BULLYING BEHAVIOUR FORMS

Cyberbullying can include:

Text Messaging - unwelcome or threatening text.

Picture or video clips - embarrassing or inappropriate images.

Phone calls - silent calls or abusive answerphone messages.

Emails - abusive or threatening messages.

Online chat rooms - menacing or upsetting comments in web-based conversation.

Instant messaging - hurtful or intimidating real time messages.

Websites - the creation of false or defamatory websites about an individual.

Social networking - e.g. Instagram, Ask.fm, Twitter, Snapchat - false information, social exclusion or isolation.

Online gaming - victimising or intimidating individuals on shared internet-based games.

WHY CYBER BULLYING IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FORMS OF BULLYING:

- Although cyber bullying is perceived as anonymous, it leaves a trail of evidence.
- Initially, your child may not know where or whom it has come from and the bully may attempt to remain anonymous.
- It can happen 24/7 and invade home/personal space.
- The offending behaviour can quickly reach a large audience.
- It's hard to control negative comments/images once posted/uploaded.
- Research suggests cyber bullying may have a greater emotional and psychological impact than other forms of bullying.
- Cyber bullying usually takes place out of school hours.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?

Look for changes in your child:

- Being secretive about work on any device with internet access
- Keeping mobile on silent
- Staying in their bedroom
- Changes in relationships with their friends
- Anxious, moody, withdrawn, quiet
- Seemingly unhappy but refusing to say why
- Complaining of headaches, stomach ache or other illnesses
- Sleeping difficulties
- Deterioration in their work

ARE YOU SWITCHED ON?

- ICT is an important part of our child's education and social life.
- It is essential that you and your child understand the benefits and responsible use of technology.
- Switching off the internet or mobile phones isn't the answer.
- Don't wait for something to happen, make sure you and your child know how to use technology safely including the anti-cyber bullying code.
- See www.digizen.org for more information in "Key advice to parents and carers on cyber bullying".
- Make sure that you and your child know what to do if they or someone they know are cyber bullied e.g how to block the bully or report the offensive behaviour.
- Parental control software is widely available. It can limit when and how your child uses technology. This could be on the family computer, a tablet, personal laptop or mobile phone.
- For primary aged children it is important to consider where technology and internet access is available so that you can supervise internet access.

CYBER BULLYING AND THE LAW

Cyber bullying activities can be offences under a range of different civil and criminal laws related to harassment, threatening behaviour and malicious communications. This includes the Communications Act (2003) and the Defamation Act (2103).

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Encourage your child to talk to you or a trusted adult if there is a problem. Significant numbers of children do not tell anyone.
- Don't let your emotions take over. Talk calmly about what is happening (even though you may feel upset yourself) and reassure them that it is not their fault.
- Listen and take what is said seriously.
- Save the evidence. Learn how to keep records of all offending messages, pictures or online conversations. This will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by school, internet service providers (ISP), mobile phone companies or even the police, to investigate what is happening and have a say.
- Talk to the school and report all incidents. Research has shown that most cyber bullying is by someone from the same class or year group.
- Do not respond to the cyber bully or try to take the law into your own hands. See the contacts section on the back of this leaflet for services you can talk to for free, confidential advice before taking any action.

TALKING TO SCHOOL

Schools must have an anti-bullying policy that addresses all forms of bullying including cyber bullying. It should make clear the measures that can be taken to effectively respond to cyber bullying incidents.



HOW CAN SCHOOL HELP?

If you think your child is being Bullied or Cyber Bullied do the following:

- Read through the 'Is it Arguing or Bullying' student information leaflet. This is available on our website or you can request a paper copy.
- Decide what you want to do. Either:
 1. Complete a Restorative Justice Peer Resolutionor
 2. Complete an Allegation of Bullying Log.
- Inform school of your decision.
- School will then do the following.
 1. Complete a Restorative Justice Peer Resolution. You will be informed of the outcome, all families will be made aware.or
 2. Give student/family a copy of the Allegation of Bullying Log. These need to be completed and returned to school.
- Once the Allegation of Bullying Log has been completed and returned to school this will be reviewed. If appropriate this will initiate a thorough Bullying/Cyber Bullying investigation. This will be discussed with all students and families.
- Between home and school a decision will be made about the appropriate consequences. This is likely to include Police involvement.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE

- Give the school chance to investigate the situation.
- Keep in touch with school, especially if the incidents continue.
- Make sure that your child doesn't send/respond to any unwelcome messages. As frustrated as you might feel, don't start sending any messages either.
- Keep copies of any messages. Share these with school.
- Your child will feel safer and happier knowing that adults are working together to support them.

Contacts for Further Help and Advice

Help Lines

Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Report suspected online child abuse or grooming

Childline

0800 1111 - www.childline.org.uk

Free confidential 24 hour telephone lines for children and young people

Family Lives

0808 800 2222 - www.familylives.org.uk

Confidential support and guidance for parents and families

Useful Websites Regarding Cyber bullying Information and Guidance

Childnet

www.childnet.com

Working to make the internet a great and safe place

Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Report suspected online child abuse or grooming

Digizen

www.digizen.org

Advice for children and young people about online behaviour and its implications

Anti-bullying Alliance

www.anti-bullying.org.uk

Provides a wealth of information and advice from an alliance of the leading anti-bullying organisations.