

Department of Education advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying Nov 2014

Cyberbullying

Most children will have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. Cyberbullying involves a number of on line bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Young people who bully others online can be hidden and subtle.

Cyberbullying can also involve adults; with some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines or ridicules them.

Parents must make it clear this is unacceptable behaviour and lead by example. Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can easily be reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention to share view directly.

Possible signs of cyberbullying

- Being upset after using the internet/mobile phone
- Secretive about online activities
- Spending more or less time online
- Withdrawn, upset or outraged after being online
- Not wanting to go to school/avoiding friends
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low self esteem.

Social networking

Can create a false sense of security. It can be easier to say or reveal things; be cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. Young people must remember there are offline consequences to online behaviour. Funny comments can be misinterpreted.

Younger children are signing up to social networking and may not have the maturity to handle their online identity. Minimum age restrictions are usually 13, if accessed before this is can expose children to unnecessary bullying. Social networking can increase existing social pressures and reinforce a sense of isolation; for example a photo not being liked or exclusion from group chats.

Set boundaries about what they can and cannot do online. If broken restrict internet access for a period of time. Ensure privacy settings, parental controls and built in internet safety features are used. Talk to understand the ways in which the internet, social media and mobile phones are used.

Talk about responsible behaviour. Ensure they know they can go and talk to an adult if being bullied or need support.

Advice for children

- Ensure privacy settings are used on all devices/apps
- Respect others
- Be careful what pictures/videos are uploaded; once shared it cannot be taken back
- Only add people you know and trust; keep personal information safe and location hidden
- Treat your password like your toothbrush- keep it to yourself and change it regularly
- Block the bully
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending emails/text messages/online conversations
- Save any evidence
- Tell an adult you trust
- Report bullying on the sites

Full advice with further links and advice.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375420/Advice_for_Parents_on_Cyberbullying_131114.pdf