

Advice for Parents/Carers: Cyberbullying

What is Cyberbullying?

"Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone." DCFS 2007

- Cyberbullying can take place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is not restricted to a specific location
- It can occur on a vast Scale due to the size and speed of the internet and can be very hard to control
- Bullies attempt to be anonymous (hide online) and can feel "distanced" from the incident
- "Bystanders" can easily become perpetrators by forwarding or not reporting cyberbullying
- Cyberbullying can occur unintentionally – often due to a lack of awareness/empathy from the bully
- Whilst there is not a specific law which makes Cyberbullying illegal it can potentially be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including Protection from Harassment Act (1997), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Communications Act (2003), Obscene Publications Act (1959) and Computer Misuse Act (1990)
- Cyberbullying incidents can be used as evidence but only if young people save the bullying messages/material and show it to an adult
- Cyberbullying should not be tolerated and should be reported to the appropriate service provider (e.g. website, mobile phone company) as soon as possible.
- Cyberbullying can occur in many forms:
 - Mobile Phones (Texting/Videos/Photos), Social Networking sites, Websites, Chatrooms, IM etc

Key Advice for Young People

- Always respect others – think about what you say online and what images you send/post – if you wouldn't like it said to or about you then don't post or send.
- Remember that anything you publish online can be made public very quickly and you will never be sure who may have seen it. Once something is posted you may lose control
- Treat your password like a toothbrush – never share it with anyone and only give your personal information like mobile phone number or email address to trusted real-life friends
- Learn how to block or report online Bullies or anyone behaving badly.
- Don't retaliate or reply, this can sometimes be used to get you into trouble!
- Save the evidence – text messages, online conversation, pictures etc
- Always make sure you tell:
 - an adult you trust or contact someone like Childline
 - The service provider e.g website, mobile phone company etc
 - The school or maybe even the police
- If you see Cyberbullying going on, then support the victim and REPORT the bullying

Key Advice for Parents/Carers

- Your child is just as likely to be a bully as they are to be a target. Be alert to your child being upset after using the internet/phones – they may be secretive, change relationships with friends
- Talk to your child and understand how they are using the internet and their phone
- Use safety tools and parental controls – if you're not sure how contact your service provider. Please note tools are not always 100% effective
- Remind your child not to retaliate and discuss how to block and report online bullies
- Work with the school to resolve the issue if other pupils are involved
- Keep any evidence of Cyberbullying – emails, Online Conversations, texts, screen prints of sites/chat messages – try and include time/date etc
- Report the Cyberbullying:
 - Contact the school so they could take action if it involves another pupils
 - Contact the service provider to report the user and remove content
 - If the cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed then consider contacting the police.

Useful Contacts

www.cybermentors.org.uk – Online advice and support from other young people

www.beatbullying.org

www.digizen.org/cyberbullying

www.kent.gov.uk/esafety

www.kent.police.uk/internetsafety