



KNOWSLEY CITY LEARNING CENTRE'S GUIDE TO PREVENTING CYBERBULLYING

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the practice of posting or sending harmful images or text via the Internet or other digital communication tools, such as mobile phones, email, instant messaging, chat rooms, video game spaces or social networking environments such as My Space, Twitter, Bebo and Facebook. The following are some tips for parents and educators to help keep children safe.

1 Teach children to never pass along harmful or cruel messages or images.

2 Teach children to delete suspicious email, text or chat messages without opening them.

3 Teach children to never post personal information online.

4 Teach children how to use technology to block communication with Cyberbullies.

5 Speak to children about the importance of telling a parent or adult about any Cyberbullying they're witness to.

6 At home, supervise your child's time online. Putting the computer/laptop in a communal area, such as the lounge, is a good idea. This is quite difficult as most game consoles and smart phones have chat facilities now.

7 Addressing Cyberbullying school-wide is key, schools should institute a formal policy for dealing with any Cyberbullying instances. Be sure children fully understand the consequences. For some guidelines on crafting a program please contact Knowsley City Learning Centres.

8 Create a community/parent program to educate parents about the dangers of Cyberbullying, this could include training sessions about using the web safely and how to check children's phones for signs of unacceptable content. Another idea is to have children work to create an awareness campaign and let them deliver a session or assembly to parents.

9 Teach children the basics of smart and savvy Web behavior, such as never revealing passwords or real last names. Regular, age appropriate eSafety sessions with ICT activities can be booked via Knowsley City Learning Centres to support teachers with this.

10 Pay attention. If you notice a child is withdrawn, depressed or reluctant to attend school or social events, investigate.

There are a whole host of ways to help pupils combat mobile or online bullying and it may be worth letting children or young people know how they can seek help within your school. Check your school's bullying policy and if your school doesn't actively pursue it, then perhaps you could initiate something according to the needs of pupils at your school. Maybe you could discuss developing a policy specific to 'cyber' bullying (ie, mobile phone and online) with your senior management team. For examples of methods that have proved successful in other schools please contact Knowsley CLCs.

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GUIDE TO DEALING WITH CYBERBULLYING

- 1** *Always Tell Someone you trust what is happening* - teacher or friend. This might help you feel better and the person may also be able to help you to find a way to stop it altogether.
- 2** *Never reply* - Often bullies will send a message to get a reaction, so don't respond to it. Bullies who don't get a reaction often get bored and stop.
- 3** *Keep and save the messages* - If there's a website, online voting site, weblog or message board that says bad things about you, save a copy or print it off. The internet service provider (ISP) that hosts the site should have an email address or helpline where you can send the copy and ask them to get rid of it. It might be a good idea to ask a trusted adult to help you contact the ISP.
- 4** *Take a break from your computer/phone* - for a few days! Let your phone take messages and don't chat or check texts or emails. If you really need to make calls, find out if your phone can turn off incoming texts for a while. The bully might just get bored and stop.
- 5** *Change your ID and account for social networks/messenger sites* - you could sign up again with a different chat ID – use a nickname and don't give out any of your personal info.
- 6** *Your mobile phone provider can help you by changing your number* - if you start getting bullied through your phone.
- 7** *You may need to tell the local Police* - It's against the law to make a call or send a text or email that's really abusive or menacing, or to keep sending messages that will annoy someone or make them anxious. The sender could get fined or even go to prison.

If a young person is not comfortable talking to an adult or friend, or perhaps wants to remain anonymous, there are several helplines that can offer advice. And best of all, they are free. Childline: 0800 1111, Samaritans 08457 90 90 90, and NSPCC 0808 800 5000

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CYBERBULLYING ADVICE

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Advice to give to parents

Parents can also help play their part in tackling Cyberbullying. Research shows over 50 per cent of parents are either not worried or not sure whether to be worried that their child could be bullied or threatened via mobile phones, social networks or messenger/chat services. The best advice you can give them is:

- Talk to their children to try and understand the problem*
- Ask them not to take their children's mobile phones or laptops away, as this can often make a child feel like they have done something wrong and are being punished for someone else's wrongdoing*
- For many young people, mobile phones are a great way to keep in touch with friends and gives them a degree of responsibility and independence. They can also be useful in an emergency.*
- At home, supervise your child's time online. Putting the computer/laptop in a communal area, such as the lounge, is a good idea.*

It's important not to be alarmist. While Cyberbullying can be a problem, for many young people, use of mobile phones and the internet can bring many benefits. No one wants to scare a whole generation of users away from this exciting new technology, but hopefully by providing educational resources we can help children, young people and their parents become more aware of the potential dangers and how to combat them.

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