

CYBERBULLYING

The Department for Education's non-statutory guidance *Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying* (November 2014) defines cyberbullying as bullying that takes place using technology.

Cyberbullying differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space, the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Research into the extent of cyberbullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It may also affect members of school staff and other adults; there are examples of staff being ridiculed, threatened and otherwise abused online by pupils.

Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but other incidents of cyberbullying may be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.

In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions can have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated. Pupils acting as 'accessories', who actively support cyberbullying will be dealt with under the terms of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

The School will investigate reported incidents of cyberbullying and work closely with pupils and their families to educate all parties in strategies to prevent incidents of cyberbullying, including the responsible use and monitoring of digital technology, with the assistance of outside agencies, such as CEOP (The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) and the Police if appropriate.

Staff will follow the statutory guidance *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* (Department for Education 2022) as outlined in the Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy when investigating incidences of cyberbullying.

SOURCES OR SUPPORT/INFORMATION

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Excellent resources, advice and activities for parents, teachers and children from CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre)

Childnet International: www.childnet.com

Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety

Parent Zone: <https://parentzone.org.uk>

A range of resources for parents from The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) about how to keep children safe online