



# Digital Bulletin – Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when somebody bullies others using electronic means, this might involve social media and messaging services on the internet, accessed on a mobile phone, tablet or gaming platform. The behaviour is usually repeated and at times can be as subtle as leaving someone out of a group chat or cropping them out of a picture. At school we would treat any cyberbullying incident the same as if it were face to face, regardless of whether it occurred within the school day or not.

## Forms of Cyberbullying

Like any form of bullying, cyberbullying can be horrible for the children involved and hard for them to talk about. Cyberbullying can happen via text, email and on social networks and gaming platforms. It can consist of:

- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment and stalking
- Defamation
- Rejection and exclusion
- Identity theft, hacking into social media accounts and impersonation
- Publicly posting or sending on personal information about another person
- Manipulation

## Specific Concerns About Cyberbullying

One of the biggest differences between cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying is that it can be hard to get away from. Young people could be bullied anywhere, anytime – even when they're at home.

- It can reach a vast audience in a matter of seconds
- It has the potential to draw in large numbers of people
- It takes 'repetition' to a different level, with hurtful comments and images being shared multiple times
- It has the potential to impact at any time of day or night
- It can offer a degree of anonymity to the perpetrator
- There are very few children that have not been impacted in some way, either as the perpetrator or the victim
- It's difficult to police and to punish
- There is often some form of evidence (e.g. screenshot, text message).

## Spotting Signs of Cyberbullying:

Your child might be reluctant to tell you that they are worried about cyberbullying so it's important to look out for the signs:

- Stopping using their electronic devices suddenly or unexpectedly
- Seeming nervous or jumpy when using their devices, or becoming obsessive about being constantly online
- Any changes in behaviour such as becoming sad, withdrawn, angry, or lashing out
- Reluctance to go to school or take part in usual social activities
- Unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach upsets
- Avoiding discussions about what they're doing online or who they're talking to

## School support

If you are concerned about your child, please make contact with the school and speak with either your son/daughter's Form Tutor or Head of Year. You can also speak with Miss Arthur (Deputy Head) or myself as Online Safety Coordinator.

If there are any topics that you would like more information about, or if you have any concerns regarding online safety, please feel free to contact me.

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