Online Safety Newsletter: October 2023

Stop Online Bullying

ST. PATRICK'S ACADEMY LISBURN

STOP cyberbullying

SAFER SCHOOLS NI

Department of Education

New Safeguarding App for Schools

This month's newsletter, is dedicated to **online bullying**. Each year group has a different area of focus, determined by responses to a recent online survey.

PEER SUPPORT

Year 8

Top tips to supporting others who are experiencing difficulties online

1. You can't promise to keep a secret
2. Let them know you are there to listen
3. Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult at school
4. Encourage them to screenshot/report/block
5. Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult at home
6. Encourage your friend to keep a diary of events
7. Signpost support
8. Reflect on how you're feeling
9. Tell them how awesome they are

Year 9

When and how to intervene in online bullying behaviour

Always consider your own safety first

Intervening in bullying behaviour means that you are stepping in to try and help the situation, when bullying *has already happened*.

Indirectly Intervening

Speaking to a teacher or speaking to the person who has experienced bullying type behaviour.

Directly Intervening

Speaking and intervening in the incidence when it happens and to the to the person experiencing or displaying bullying type behaviour.

Ways to directly and *safely* intervene online:

1. Team up with others to speak out
2. Politely question rumours and untruths
3. Invite the person who has experienced bullying type behaviour to join your group or online activity
4. Help the person who has experienced bullying type behaviour, use safety features or privacy settings to restrict contact from the person displaying bullying type behaviour
5. Explain to he person displaying bullying type behaviour why their behaviour is unacceptable (publically or privately)

Year 10

How to report online bullying behaviour

Why is it important?

- It helps create a positive atmosphere at school where online bullying is not accepted
- It helps the person experiencing online bullying behaviour
- It helps the person displaying online bullying behaviour understand their behaviour is not acceptable

The Bystander effect: ignoring bullying can make *everything worse*

Bystander: Someone who stands by and ignores bullying type behaviour

Upstander: Someone who stands up and offers support to others, who may be experiencing bullying type behaviour

Who you can report bullying behaviour to:

- Designated/Deputy Designated teachers
- Pastoral care team
- Parents/carers
- Friends
- Online Safety Group members
- Child helplines such as Childline

Methods of reporting:

- Face to face
- Online Safety Incident Report Form
- Apps
- Helplines
- Email

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Year 11
How important is context in online behaviour?

Context matters

Can you identify and assess behaviours that might be seen as bullying in different online contexts (e.g. close friendship groups vs public forums) and adjust your behaviour accordingly?

Context is very important when interpreting the meaning behind what someone is saying online.

What you say online can be easily misinterpreted without the context of a conversation.

Your relationships with other people may affect their feelings towards what you do online .

How you should act on a public forum online might be very different to how you do act with close friends online.

Take the online context into account before posting online.

Year 12
How to prevent bullying type behaviour in different contexts

No matter what the context is (e.g. school, home, workplace etc.) bullying behaviour online is repeated, negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable and unsafe through an electronic device.

Bullying online can occur in the following online contexts:

- Online gaming
- Email
- Social Media
- Telephone texts or calls

Preventative measures

You can try to prevent online bullying before it happens by e.g.

Thinking before you post. Is it **T**rue, **H**elpful, **I**nspiring, **N**ecessary and **K**ind.

Speaking out if your friends are experiencing or displaying bullying type behaviour online.

Making the most of privacy settings.

Encouraging friends to download the Safer Schools NI app.

Year 13
How to deal with extreme forms of bullying type behaviour

Flaming/trolling: screenshot evidence, report and block user, speak to a trusted adult, report to ReportHarmfulContent.com, if advised, take to police and change privacy settings

Catfishing: screenshot the account, report to social media platform, post on your profile that the other account is fake and DM important friends/family. Keep evidence of the behaviour and If it continues, get help from trusted adult/police.

Outing/Exposing: screenshot evidence, speak to parents/trusted adult, seek help from the Mix/Childline, report to ReportHarmfulContent.com if content not removed.

Cyber-stalking: Screenshot and save the messages, review your account settings, talk to a trusted adult and contact the police

Exclusion: Seek support from your friends/a trusted adult and tell your friends and classmates how you are feeling

Denigration/libel: collect evidence and talk to parent/carer, speak directly to the media source and contact a solicitor

Year 14
How to affect positive change in online groups when bullying type behaviours arise

1. Stay calm, kind and respectful
2. Be supportive and encouraging of positive behaviour
3. Be an upstander
4. Encourage your peers to not take time to read or promote negative content
5. Highlight and spread positive content online
6. Don't get pressured into joining any negative behaviour online
7. If you know someone who is having a hard time online be supportive
8. Counter-narrative
9. Block/report abusive users
10. Use humour to lighten a tense situation
11. Talk to friends offline about their online behaviour