

Schools have the power to impose a range of sanctions against pupils who are involved in bullying incidents outside school. Their anti-bullying policy must include measures to be taken with a view to:

*“...encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, in preventing all forms of bullying among pupils”*

Schools have a duty to work with other agencies, including the police, to safeguard and promote the well being of all pupils.

- Tell the school about the incident.
- Arrange a meeting with school staff.
- Explain why you want the appointment so that they can investigate before the meeting.
- Make evidence available.

### At the meeting:

- Show the evidence of cyberbullying.
- Ask for notes to be taken so that there is a record of what is discussed and agreed.
- Ask for a named contact at school for both your child and yourself.
- Agree a plan of action with a time for a follow up meeting.
- Decide if it is best for your child to attend.
- If it is a serious incident it may be referred to another agency such as the police.

### After the meeting:

- Give the head teacher time to deal with the situation.
- Keep in touch with the school – especially if the incidents continue.
- Keep your child fully informed of what is happening.

### What if the cyberbullying continues?

In most cases the school will respond sensitively to incidents of bullying and work with you to successfully resolve the situation.

If the problems persist and you would like the school to do more than they are doing you can write to the Chair of Governors and raise the issue in a formal letter.

## Contacts, Help & Advice

### Help lines

#### CEOP (Child Exploitation & Online Protection)

– to report if you suspect online child abuse or grooming contact: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

#### Beatbullying

[www.cybermentors.org.uk](http://www.cybermentors.org.uk) online peer-mentoring support for children and young people

#### Childline

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Free 24hour telephone lines for children and young people: 0800 1111

#### Kidscsape advice line:

08451 205 204 (10am-4pm weekdays)

#### Parentline Plus

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

[www.besomeonetotell.org.uk](http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk)

Tel: 0808 800 2222

### Useful Websites re Cyberbullying information and guidance

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

Including: the anti-cyberbullying code in the summary of national guidance ‘Cyberbullying: A whole-school community issue’ and ‘Know It All’ Keeping up with children on the internet.

[www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org) - Advice for children and young people

#### Anti-Bullying Alliance

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

Provides a wealth of information and advice from an alliance of the leading anti-bullying organisations.

### Local Information and Guidance

#### Leicestershire County Council

[www.beyondbullying.com](http://www.beyondbullying.com) Leicestershire County Council, Educational Psychology Service, Anti-Bullying Strategy Team

#### Leicester City Council

[www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk) - Search: anti bullying

[www.leicester.gov.uk](http://www.leicester.gov.uk) - Search: textsomeone for Leicester City schools reporting system



Leicestershire  
County Council



# Cyberbullying

Advice for parents and carers

Supporting your child to  
be safe and happy

## What is Cyberbullying?

*“The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.”*

In this leaflet Cyberbullying refers to children & young people bullying one another. If an adult is involved it is cyber harassment, stalking or potentially grooming and the police should be contacted.

## Cyberbullying behaviour can take many forms but includes:

- Text Messaging** unwelcome or threatening texts
- Picture or Video clips** embarrassing or inappropriate images
- Phone Calls** silent calls or abusive messages
- Emails** abusive or threatening messages
- Online chat rooms** menacing or upsetting comments
- Instant Messaging** hurtful or intimidating real time messages
- Websites** the creation of false or defamatory websites about an individual
- Social networking** (eg.Bebo, Facebook, Myspace) – false information, social exclusion or isolation
- Online gaming** victimising or intimidating individuals on shared game sites

## What are the signs of bullying?

Look for changes in your child:

- Secretive about work on computer
- Keeping mobile on silent
- Staying in their bedroom
- Changes in relationships with their friends
- Anxious, moody, withdrawn, quiet
- Seem unhappy but refuses to say why
- Complaining of headaches, stomach ache or other illnesses
- Sleeping difficulties
- Deterioration in their work

## Why cyberbullying is different from other forms of bullying:

- Although cyberbullying is perceived as anonymous, it leaves a trail of evidence.
- Initially, your child may not know where or whom it has come from.
- It can happen 24/7 and invade home/personal space.
- The offending behaviour can quickly reach a large audience.
- It's hard to control negative comments/images once transmitted.
- Research suggests cyberbullying may have a greater emotional and psychological impact than other forms of bullying.
- Cyberbullying usually takes place out of school hours.

## Cyberbullying...are you switched on?

- ICT is an important part of your child's education & social life.
- It is essential that you and your child understand the benefits and responsible use of technology.
- Switching off the internet or mobile phones isn't the answer.
- Don't wait for something to happen, make sure you and your child know how to use technology safely including the anti-cyberbullying code. (See useful websites - Childnet)
- Make sure that you and your child know what to do if they or someone they know are cyberbullied e.g. how to block the bully.
- Parental control software can limit who your child sends to or receives emails from and block access to chat rooms which are not moderated.
- For primary aged children it is important to consider both the location of the computer in your home so that you can supervise internet access.

## Cyberbullying and the Law

Cyberbullying activities can be offences under a range of different civil and criminal laws related to harassment, threatening behaviour and malicious communications.

## How can you help?

- Encourage your child to talk to you or a trusted adult if there is a problem. Significant numbers of children do not tell anyone.
- Talk calmly about what is happening (even though you may feel upset yourself) and reassure them that it is not their fault.
- Listen and take what is said seriously.
- Save the evidence. Learn how to keep records of all offending messages, pictures or online conversations. This will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by school, internet service providers (ISP), mobile phone companies or even the police, to investigate the cyberbullying.
- Keep talking to your child and keep them involved – it is important that they know what is happening and have a say.
- Talk to the school and report all incidents because research has shown that most cyberbullying is by someone from the same class or year group.
- Do not respond to the cyberbully or try to take the law into your own hands.

If you want to have a confidential conversation with an independent body before taking any action you can ring:

**Parentline Plus** – helpline for support and advice  
**0808 800 2222**

Text phone for hearing/speech impairments: **0800 783 6783**

**Kidscape advice line: 08451 205 204** (10am-4pm weekdays)

## Talking to school/college

Schools must have an anti-bullying policy that addresses all forms of bullying including cyberbullying. It should make clear the measures that can be taken to effectively respond to cyberbullying incidents.

