

Beat the bullies?

- Start from the fact that cyber-bullying is NEVER acceptable.
- **Even if YOUR child is the cyber-bully, a positive outcome can be achieved for you and them.**
- There are people you can talk to about this and there is a lot of advice online about what to do..
- **A calm and purposeful approach is far better and more productive than an angry one.**
- It may take time to stop a situation that has been inexistence for some time. Persistence is the key.
- **Acceptable Use policies exist in school....some families have them in their homes too.**
- Responsible use of technology has to be taught, monitored and evaluated. It is NOT a right.
- **Some children really think they can do whatever they like, particularly if they know more about the technology than their parents do! Take the journey with them. Become part of their online world.**
- The benefits available from engaging with online technology FAR outweigh the risks.
- **Together, we can make E-Sussex, E-Safe.**

Further information

Google advice on cyberbullying

<http://www.google.co.uk/familysafety/>

Kidscape advice on cyberbullying

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying/>

Childline advice on cyberbullying

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/OnlineSafety/Pages/CyberBullying.aspx?gclid=CKLG48TyogYCFcoe4QodySSYYw>

“Laugh at it, and you’re part of it.”

Hard Hitting Govt advice on cyberbullying

<http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>

CEOP advice on cyber-bullying

<http://ceopcentre.com/reportabuse/cyberbullying2.asp>

Cyber Mentors

<http://www.cybermentors.org.uk/>

Cyber-bullying

(A general guide for parents and young people)

In a nutshell....

Cyberbullying is bullying which uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an Internet service or mobile technologies - such as e-mail, chat room discussion groups, instant messaging, webpages or SMS (text messaging) - with the intention of harming another person.

The reality...

Children fall out. Usually, this results in a few cross words on the playground, or the odd hurtful email or instant message. Unfortunately, children seem to view their online world as one that is "private", and it is this misconception that is at the root of many harmful online behaviours. Generally, children feel that they can hide behind aliases online and that their activities cannot be tracked back to them. This is incorrect.

When to tell someone...

As soon as it happens is best. Do not let it become a problem by hoping it will go away. Sometimes, it does, but more often than not, it becomes more widespread in terms of frequency and content.

Don't delete....

Tempting as it may be, if you, or someone in your family is receiving repeated nasty messages, deleting them can hinder any investigative process that may be necessary. Keep the messages in a folder. If you or someone in your family is receiving emails from a particular sender, it is easy to create a "message rule" that will put

messages from that sender into a folder automatically. You don't have to read them.

Don't assume....

It is not easy to tell someone about a problem sometimes. This may be because you have tried to deal with it yourself. Maybe even by sending a nasty message back. You may be anxious that your parents or carers may be upset that you have used bad language yourself. What really matters here is that you tell someone. Responding angrily is understandable, but often, that is precisely the reaction the cyber-bully wants. You have the right to reply, but you also have the right NOT to reply. Sometimes, the most effective way of dealing with this is not to offer any reply at all. Usually, the cyber-bully loses interest, but if they are determined to get under your skin, every message they send adds weight to the evidence against them.

For parents and carers....

One reason why this leaflet is written for both parents/carers and young people is that you are in this together. Bullies are essentially cowards. They do not want people to talk about their activities, and they certainly do not want people collaborating to put a stop to it. Your child may well have sent a nasty message or two back. **At this stage, this is not the point that needs addressing.** You will, understandably, be worried and possibly angry. What your child needs from you is a calm, supportive approach. The time to teach them that two wrongs do not make a right comes later.

What about my child's school?

A child who is the victim of sustained bullying needs support from everyone. Your child's teacher(s) will certainly want to know, and they may want to take advice from senior colleagues. If the perpetrator is in the same school, the school can take direct action. If the perpetrator is in another school then your child's school can work with them. If the perpetrator is not in school, then outside agencies, including the Police may become involved.

Cyber-bullying is not acceptable... ever.

What if MY child is the bully?

Then this will come as a shock. Sometimes, though, children recognise that they have got into a habit of unacceptable behaviour and just can't stop. If they come to you with this problem, then they are already half way there to stopping. They will need support, but above all praise that they are taking this step themselves. You will need to try to find out why it started in the first place, as it may be a response to some underlying fear they have.

Cyber-bullying can be stopped, and with positive outcomes for all concerned...even the bully. Some young people really do not realise the harm they are causing... others do. Some respond to a soft-touch approach while others need firmer boundaries. The more we work together on this, the better the outcome will be for everyone.