



Briefing for school leaders and teachers

Anti-Bullying Week is an opportunity to talk openly about the effects of bullying on the lives of children and young people and to take action to stop it. The best schools are rarely those that say 'we have no bullying here'; rather they are schools that take positive steps to prevent bullying, and quick and effective action when it happens. They recognise that bullying outside of school – whether in the community or through cyberspace – impacts on children during the school day and take active steps to work with children to prevent bullying anywhere and at anytime. **This Anti-Bullying Week we call on children and young people to take the lead on creating a future without bullying – using new technologies to promote positive communication and relationships rather than being held back by cyberbullying.**

What do we mean by bullying?

ABA defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

New technologies are now a central part of young people's lives and learning in school as well as at home and in their leisure time. The *Have your Say* survey¹ conducted for Safer Internet Day 2013 showed:

- **primary age children are highly engaged with digital technology:** 86 per cent of 7–11s use some form of online communication tool, such as social networks and virtual worlds (56 per cent), chat functions in online gaming (38 per cent) or webcams (28 per cent). There is a rapid increase in use of technology from 7 to 11 years, with just 5 per cent of 11 year olds not engaging in any form of online communication (compared to 22 per cent of 7 year olds).

- **secondary age children are prolific online communicators:** 96 per cent of young people aged 11–19 use some form of online communication tool, including services such as social networks (74 per cent), emails (72 per cent), instant messaging (68 per cent) and webcams (52 per cent).

The almost universal use of smartphones by young people and increasingly younger children makes it more important than ever that schools play their role in supporting young people to negotiate and enjoy this aspect of their lives while keeping themselves safe, showing respect for others and acting appropriately to challenge bullying behaviour wherever it happens.

The aims for Anti-Bullying Week 2013 are:

- to ensure all children and young people are equipped to recognise and challenge bullying behaviour wherever it happens – whether face to face or in cyberspace
- to equip schools, colleges and youth service leaders with resources to encourage youth-led anti-bullying initiatives and the positive use of new technologies
- to educate those who support and work with children to recognise those who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying through new technologies – encouraging an inclusive approach to all e-safety education.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has been helpfully described as 'an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.'²



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Cyberbullying can be an extension of bullying behaviour that is already happening in school or the wider community – or it can be between people that rarely meet face to face – or have never met in person. Cyberbullying has some unique characteristics that make it particularly painful to experience – and present particular challenges to school staff dealing with incidents of cyberbullying.

- Cyberbullying is directly linked to a wider 'culture of disinhibition'.³ The rise in online communication has led to a certain level of disconnect between actions and consequences – because you do not see the immediate reaction of the recipient, it's easy to make statements or publish images and videos without thinking of the hurt caused.
- Cyberbullying is particularly relentless – victims of cyberbullying report the feeling of being unable to escape or switch off from it.
- It's difficult to control the circulation of messages or images.
- Bullying and harassment online often involves a large audience with a number of players. It's rarely limited to interaction between two individuals – as teachers you will be aware how quickly it draws in a large number of children, and sometimes family members and other adults.
- The perpetrator or perpetrators can hide behind false identities and can feel that they have a level of anonymity.

What makes cyberbullying so dangerous ... is that anyone can practise it without having to confront the victim. You don't have to be strong or fast, simply equipped with a cell phone or computer and a willingness to terrorise.⁴

How big a problem is cyberbullying?

Estimates of the incidence and prevalence of cyberbullying vary, but it is clear from a wide range of national and international research that this has become an endemic behaviour that is distressing for many children and young people to experience and/or witness and sometimes has extremely serious consequences.

- In a survey of teachers' perspectives on e-safety⁵ 91 per cent of secondary teachers and 52 per cent of primary teachers said that pupils at their school have experienced cyberbullying, and that most of it is perpetrated via social networking sites.
- In the *Have your Say* survey 40 per cent of the sample of 7–11-year-olds said they knew someone who had been cyberbullied and 20 per cent said that bullying stopped them having fun online. Fifteen per cent of the sample of 11–19-year-olds said that bullying stopped them enjoying their time online and 23 per cent said that 'gossip and mean comments' stopped them enjoying their time online.
- A government commissioned review of research to identify groups particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying⁶ reported that:
 - between 8 and 34 per cent of children and young people in the UK have been cyberbullied
 - 30 per cent of a large sample of secondary school pupils in England have been deliberately targeted, threatened or humiliated by the use of mobile phones or the internet
 - girls are twice as likely to experience persistent cyberbullying than boys
 - vulnerable groups at greater risk include children with special educational needs, children in receipt of free school meals (FSM), children from Black and minority ethnic groups, children of Gypsy-Roma, Traveller or Irish Heritage, European and East European groups, children from Chinese groups and children of mixed ethnicity
 - exposure to cyberbullying results in significant levels of distress and stress with the highest levels reported in children aged 9–12
 - cyberbullying evokes stronger negative feelings, fear and a sense of helplessness than offline bullying and is linked to school failure, depression, anxiety and psychological problems
 - the impersonal nature of online communication means that not all perpetrators intend to cause distress.



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Let's talk about sex and relationships online

Whenever we run training courses or give talks relating to cyberbullying the issue of 'sexting' or sending of messages, images or video with a sexual content comes up. It is vital that schools see this as a child protection issue and incorporate this into their wider work to address bullying behaviour; that they create opportunities to discuss appropriate relationships and boundaries in an online environment with students and staff; and that they equip all staff to deal appropriately with reports of sexualised bullying and behaviour online. This is no longer limited to secondary schools – primary schools are increasingly dealing with these cases. The Anti-Bullying Alliance website has a wealth of information to support schools in this area and the ABA runs specific training relating to sexual bullying and 'sexting' throughout the year.

How should schools address cyberbullying?

Schools have a legal duty to ensure the safety of all children and young people and to prevent all forms of bullying. Head teachers also have powers to respond to bullying outside of school premises, and to search for and confiscate items that may have been used to bully or intimidate.

Know the legal requirements

In 2012 the government published advice⁷ for schools on preventing and tackling bullying that clarifies the legal duties of schools and colleges. We recommend that all school staff familiarise themselves with this document. Key points in the advice that are of more specific relevance to cyberbullying are outlined below.

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006⁸ and Education Act 2011⁹ gives teachers stronger powers to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. There is also separate advice¹⁰ on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices).

- Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence.* If school staff are concerned that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication that conveys a message that is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information that is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- Schools are public bodies and therefore also have duties under The Equality Act 2010¹¹ to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- The revised Ofsted Inspection Framework¹² also includes a strong focus on bullying with inspectors looking at schools' actions to tackle all forms of bullying and harassment, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying relating to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability.

Adopt a whole school approach

To tackle cyberbullying effectively, ABA recommends that schools address the issue within the context of a whole school approach. The ABA School Assessment tool¹³ – free to download from the ABA website – can help you to assess your school's areas of strength and weakness in relation to bullying (including cyberbullying), and to identify areas for improvement.

* For example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.



A whole-school approach to tackling bullying involves taking the following actions.

- Identify a lead in the school who coordinates the prevention and response to all forms of bullying.
- Make sure you have an agreed, shared definition of bullying (including cyberbullying) that is understood by all members of the school community. Take extra care to make sure the definition is understood by children with special educational needs and disabilities and those with English as a second language.
- Keep your anti-bullying policy up to date and make sure it can easily be accessed by all members of your school community (we would recommend publishing this on your school website and sharing with anyone who works with children and young people on your school site).
- Work with pupils to create a charter for your school that make it clear that bullying of any kind – including cyberbullying is not tolerated.
- Make time to consult with pupils about their experiences of bullying – both inside and outside of school. This is vital with cyberbullying, which is often subject to quickly changing trends. Ask children what they would recommend you do as a school community to tackle bullying. Pay particular notice to groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable to bullying – such as those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Make sure that all members of your school community feel confident to report bullying wherever or however it takes place. Have clear protocols in place for managing reports of cyberbullying.
- Make sure that staff and pupils have the skills and ability to challenge bullying wherever and whenever it happens.
- Create opportunities for pupils to work creatively to tackle bullying – build anti-bullying work into all aspects of the curriculum; dedicate time in PSHE and citizenship to discuss issues relating to bullying; encourage the creative use of new technologies to express how pupils feel about bullying and to create programs or apps that assist with challenging bullying behaviour.
- Create opportunities for parents and carers to discuss concerns about bullying and to learn ways to support their child if they are bullied.
- Make sure that pupils, staff and parents and carers know where to access support if they have concerns about bullying. For online support, young people can also contact Childline www.childline.org.uk or Cybermentors www.cybermentors.org.uk

How can we take part in Anti-Bullying Week 2013?

Anti-Bullying Week 2013 is a great opportunity to focus time in the school calendar on raising awareness of all forms of bullying – including cyberbullying.

Be prepared

- We know that the focus on bullying in November leads to an increase in calls to ChildLine about bullying – so don't be surprised if running activities relating to bullying leads to an increase in reports of bullying in your school. Make sure all staff (including support staff and outside contractors working with students in your school) know the immediate response they should give if students report bullying incidents, and know how to escalate reports of bullying.
- Make sure designated staff for dealing with cyberbullying incidents are up to date on reporting mechanisms on different sites and services so they can support students in making a report. Most services have rules about what kind of content is allowed on the site. Often if something is harassing an individual, either pornographic or violent, it breaks the rules. The Childnet International website has an easy reporting mechanisms link¹⁴ you can use to find the most common reporting tools.



Be proactive

- Use assemblies, tutor periods and curriculum opportunities to discuss cyberbullying with your pupils; how it occurs, why it occurs, and the consequences of such behaviour. Think carefully about how you may need to adapt these messages for children with special educational needs or disabilities or students with English as a second language. Use these activities to make all students aware of the following key advice provided by Childnet International on preventing and responding to cyberbullying.

1. **Always respect others:** be careful what you say online and what images you send.
2. **Think before you send:** whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.
3. **Keep it private:** only give your mobile number, personal email address and other contact details to trusted friends. If you are active on social networking services think about what you are sharing and who you are sharing it with. You can set your privacy settings to limit who can see your content.
4. **Block the bully:** learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
5. **Don't retaliate or reply:** the person wants a reaction and this can be of any sort. Getting any kind of reaction from you – positive and negative – can be enough to make the person continue.
6. **Save the evidence:** learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
7. **Make sure you tell:**
 - an adult you trust, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111 in confidence
 - the provider of the service: check the service provider's website to see where to report incidents
 - your school: your teacher or the anti-bullying coordinator can help you.
8. **Finally, take action, if you are aware cyberbullying is going on, support the victim/s and report the bullying!**

- You can also encourage older students to use the Childnet International checklist¹⁵ to manage and maintain their online reputation. The simple five-point checklist helps students to understand how your digital footprint can be positive or negative and shape how people see now or in the future.

Be positive

- Be positive about the benefits of the proper use of technology and how pupils themselves can help prevent cyberbullying. Create opportunities for young people in your school to use technology in positive ways to raise awareness of bullying, or to create mechanisms to report bullying. Young people often suggest that a key barrier to telling an adult they are being cyberbullied is the fear that the technology they use on a daily basis will be confiscated. Many young people do speak out or challenge when people say mean things on line. In the *Have your Say* survey, 32 per cent of secondary respondents said they had done this and young people are increasingly likely to challenge mean comments as they get older. Many young people are also involved in anti-bullying peer mentoring schemes like Beatbullying's cybermentors.

Further resources

Anti-Bullying Week 2013 Activities

The Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have produced a range of activities and resources to support Anti-Bullying Week 2013. The ABA website also lists a wealth of resources relating to cyberbullying and all aspects of bullying behaviour. For more details visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Week 2013 campaign pack and merchandise

The Anti-Bullying Week 2013 campaign pack includes all you need to run an event or activity in your school this Anti-Bullying Week including great fundraising ideas, posters, stickers and badges. To order your campaign pack and other Anti-Bullying Alliance merchandise visit www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day 2014 will take place on the 11 February 2014, with the theme 'Let's create a better internet together'. The Anti-Bullying Alliance and Childnet International will work together to connect the two campaigns so that schools, colleges and colleagues working with children and young people in the wider community can plan activities throughout the school year to prevent cyberbullying, promote e-safety and create a positive online world.

Help and advice

ChildLine

ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. Trained volunteers are on hand to provide advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Call Childline on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk

CyberMentors

CyberMentors is a safe social-networking site providing information and support for young people affected by bullying. Young people aged 11–25 are trained as CyberMentors in schools and online, so that they can offer support and advice to other young people. CyberMentors are also supported by trained counsellors, who are available online if needed. For more information and free CyberMentors resources visit www.cybermentors.org.uk

Kidscape

Kidscape works UK-wide to provide individuals and organisations with the practical skills and resources necessary to keep children safe from harm. It runs assertiveness training courses for children and young people under the age of 16, their parents or carers, and those who work with them. Kidscape operates a telephone helpline for the parents and carers of bullied children. Call 08451 205204 or visit www.kidscape.org.uk

Family Lives

Family Lives is a national charity that works for, and with, parents. You can get support and advice from the Parentline helpline on 0808 800 2222 or www.familylives.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre

The UK Internet Centre runs a helpline for professionals working with children and young people who have concerns about the misuse of social networking sites, cyberbullying, sexting, online gaming and child protection online. Call 0844 381 4772 or visit www.saferinternet.org.uk

Get involved with the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Join the ABA School and College Network

A good way to show your commitment to tackling bullying throughout the year is to join the hundreds of other schools and colleges that are members of the ABA School and College Network. Membership is free and includes a range of benefits including monthly bulletins to keep you up to date on all aspects of bullying policy and practice. Sign up today by visiting www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Become a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

ABA membership is open to all individuals and organisations that support the vision of the Anti-Bullying Alliance to stop bullying and create safe environments where children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. Apply today by visiting www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Donate to the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance

We are delighted when schools and colleges support the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance by raising funds either through activities and events during Anti-Bullying Week itself or throughout the year. For fundraising information and support visit <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/donate>. You can also make a personal donation by texting ABWK13 £2/£5/£10 to 70070 (e.g. ABW13 £5).



References

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- 13 Anti-Bullying Alliance (2010) *The ABA School Assessment Tool*. London: National Children's Bureau. Available from www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- 14 www.childnet.com/resources/how-to-make-a-report
- 15 Childnet International (2013) *Online Reputation Checklist*. UK: Childnet International. www.childnet.com/ufiles/Online%20Reputation%20Checklist.pdf (last accessed 22 August 2013)



The Anti-Bullying Alliance would like to offer our particular thanks to the following organisations that have for supporting Anti-Bullying Week.



Iris Worldwide



Random House Children's Publishers

Random House Children's Publishers is one of the UK's largest children's publishers. It's home to a range of award winning and best loved authors and illustrators including Jacqueline Wilson, Shirley Hughes, John Burningham and Terry Pratchett. For free resources, information and updates go to randomhousechildrens.co.uk @RHKidsUK_Edu



The FA Tesco Skills Programme

The FA Tesco Skills programme is a nationwide initiative run by The Football Association and funded by Sport England and Tesco. The FA Tesco Skills Programme provides specialist, age appropriate football coaching for children which is child-centred and caters for all ability levels. The FA Tesco Skills coaching is free to schools, parents and clubs. To find your nearest after school and free holiday courses, visit TheFA.com/TescoSkills