

The Ashcombe School



Anti-Bullying Policy

<i>Presented to Governor Sub Committee</i>	<i>HrW</i>
<i>Lead Governor and Lead SMT</i>	<i>MG, JN & SJK</i>
<i>Approved by Governing Body on:</i>	<i>June 2018</i>
<i>Review Cycle:</i>	<i>Annual</i>
<i>Review Date:</i>	<i>2019</i>

The Ashcombe School

1. Introduction:

Schools have a duty of care for pupils and staff alike and, to this end, The Ashcombe School strives to create a safe and happy environment (in line with 'Every Child Matters'), believing that all bullying is unacceptable, whether at home, at school, at work, in the local community or when social networking. We believe that school should provide a safe, caring and happy place for young people to learn and for adults to work. If this is achieved, the school will be able to develop teaching and learning, whilst fostering an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety, both on the premises and out of school hours.

The policy's primary objective is to ensure that members of the school community are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs. However, bullying is not confined to school and this policy aims to make pupils aware of what action they can take both now and in their adult lives, whether as victims of bullying, or as bystanders.

2. Context:

Our previous Anti-Bullying Policy was approved by Governors in July 2009. Since the *Education and Inspections Act 2008*, the *Equality Act (2010)*, *Equality Duty (2011)*, the increased use of technology and the introduction of the new *Ofsted framework in January 2012*, a full review in early 2013 involved pupils, parents, staff and governors.

This further revision of the policy was approved by governors in July 2018 and draws on Department for Education guidance on dealing with bullying, particularly 'Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' 2017 and Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff/Parents and Carers 2014. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy which is available on the school website and can be requested from the school office.

<http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/01-about/docs/07-key-info/behaviour%20policy.pdf>

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Governing Body will regularly review the Behaviour Policy, which the Headteacher must consider in determining measures to promote good behaviour and discipline.

The Governing Body may also bring to the Headteacher's attention such further measures as they consider necessary, and offer guidance, as they consider appropriate, to promote safeguarding and the welfare of pupils.

It is 'good practice' to have a nominated Governor with the responsibility for Anti-bullying. The school's nominated Governor is Mr Terry McDonald. His responsibilities are to ensure policy and procedures are in line with "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015) and "Keeping Children Safe in School" (2016)

The Headteacher and Senior Pastoral Staff have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Cases will be managed according to the circumstances and will be recorded and analysed to see whether patterns emerge from the nature of the bullying or the identity of the perpetrators.

The Governing Body, Headteacher and Staff will ensure that the policy is implemented equally in all cases, without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, gender, disability or sexuality. They will ensure that pupils are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

All staff (teachers, support staff and volunteers) share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied. Mutual support amongst all staff is essential for creating a high quality and safe learning environment, promoting good behaviour and implementing the agreed policy and procedures consistently.

Parents and Carers will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school, and that pupils respect both similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the school and the wider community.

Pupils will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of bullying and the rationale behind them. All pupils have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences.

If the steps prescribed in section 9 have not fully resolved parents' or carers' concerns about bullying, advice on the Complaints Procedure can be found on the 'Key Information' section of the school's website, or in print from the school office.

4. Definitions of Bullying:

The Department for Education definition of bullying from '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying*' (October 2014) is:

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, (which may be) repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences."

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as "the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace." (ABA 2014)

An incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils the descriptions of bullying.

Bullying differs from '**friendship fall-out**', or other aggressive behaviour:

- *"If two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. It is not bullying."* (Olweus 1989, 1993, 1999)

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent
- Friendship 'fall outs' are seen as accidental and occasional, with no power imbalance or hierarchy, where those involved show remorse and want to resolve the situation – this is different from isolating or excluding children from groups

Why are some children and young people or adults, more vulnerable to being bullied?

Specific types of bullying include

- bullying related to race, religion or culture
- bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- bullying related to appearance or health
- bullying relating to sexual orientation e.g. homophobic language
- bullying related to gender orientation e.g. transgender

- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances e.g. a parental separation
- sexist or sexual bullying e.g. sexually offensive remarks and comments online

Bullying can be:

- Physical, e.g. kicking, hitting, taking and damaging belongings
- Verbal, e.g. name calling, taunting, threats, offensive remarks
- Relational, e.g. spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding from social groups
- Cyber, e.g. texts, e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM), social media or gaming. (See separate section on cyber bullying – appendix 5)

Bullying can take place:

- Between young people
- Between young people and staff
- Between staff
- Between individuals or groups

Certain groups of pupils and adults are known to be particularly vulnerable to bullying by others: these may include pupils with special educational needs such as learning or physical disabilities; young carers, Looked After children, those from ethnic and racial minority groups and those young who are, or may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or questioning their gender role.

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

5. Signs and Symptoms:

A victim may indicate by **signs** or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These may include:

- reluctance to attend school
- unwillingness to travel on the school bus/public transport
- truancy from specific lessons
- damage to clothing or possessions
- 'losing' more items than usual
- deterioration of school work/academic performance
- being afraid to use the Internet
- becoming jittery about receiving text messages
- unkempt uniform
- bullying towards siblings
- asking for, or taking, money without permission
- physical injuries such as unexplained bruises

Symptoms may include:

- loss of appetite
- headaches
- stomach aches
- stammering
- sudden changes in behaviour
- lack of confidence
- signs of depression

- nervousness/edginess
- difficulty in concentration
- lack of motivation to complete work
- difficulty sleeping

These are examples but this list is not exhaustive and a more detailed list can be found in the *Surrey C.C. Anti-Bullying Policy model document*.

6. Reporting Bullying

Pupils are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another pupil or by an adult. The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the bullying through the defined stages that will then be put into action. Whenever a pupil experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school. Information can be reported to a member of staff, a tutor, a Head of Year or a member of Senior Management. All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

For cases involving Lower School pupils, we also have a significant number of Peer Mentors who would be appropriate people to tell. The Peer Mentor would then be expected to inform the pupil's Head of Year. In addition to these Peer Mentors, and relating more to friendship 'fallouts' than bullying, the school also has a number of pupils trained as Peer Mediators who are available to support Lower School pupils in incidents deemed suitable by pastoral staff.

When a problem occurs outside of school and immediate advice or support is required, Childline, for example, would provide an alternative, particularly if a pupil did not feel comfortable discussing the matter with a parent, family member or carer. The school would hope that the pupil would feel able to discuss the matter with a member of staff upon their return to school.

See **Appendix 1** for further useful addresses and **Appendix 5** for information regarding cyberbullying and how to report these incidents to appropriate websites/companies

Teaching and non-teaching staff who feel that they are being bullied in the workplace, either by a staff member or by a pupil, can report their concern to their line manager or Headteacher. If such managers are involved, staff may contact the Chair of the Governing Body or Area Education Officer.

7. Responding to Bullying

The Ashcombe School adopts a three-stage approach when responding to bullying:

Stage 1: Creating a safe learning environment and anti-bullying culture

The first stage is on-going, and involves measures designed to encourage pupils to behave positively towards one another, thereby discouraging bullying.

These measures include:

- Pupils sign an Anti-Bullying statement at the transition stage
- The School Council has designed an Anti-Bullying Charter, designed by The School Council, which all tutor groups are able to review the charter before a final copy is distributed
- pupil supervision at non-lesson times
- providing safe places for vulnerable pupils to go at break times and lunchtimes e.g. Inclusion Room and Supported Learning Centre

- supervision of corridors between lessons
- opportunities for pupils to discuss bullying issues, such as in Whole School Tutor Period or a PSE lesson
- Circle Time
- assemblies
- Citizenship lessons

See **Appendix 2** for further measures

Stage 2: If bullying occurs:

The Restorative Approach

This approach encourages the reporting of incidents by reducing the victims' anxieties about repercussions and educates the perpetrators, by increasing their understanding of the difficulties caused by bullying, and encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions.

It may be appropriate to monitor the situation in the first instance, and work closely with parents and the victim to discuss if any action should be taken. It may be appropriate to hold a Restorative Justice meeting with all those involved. This might mean asking pupils, staff and parents to share their views within a meeting with a facilitator, who would ensure that all participants were able to say how they had been affected by the bullying behaviour and what needed to change. As a way forward, if thought appropriate and agreed upon, a contract would be written between the pupils.

There would then be a series of meetings to ensure that the contract was working and that problems had not re-emerged.

See **Appendix 3** for guidance on how a restorative approach might be used at this stage

Stage 3: If those involved in bullying do not respond to the Restorative Approach

If those involved do not keep to the agreements made at Restorative Justice Meetings, or repeat bullying behaviour towards other individuals, the matter will be treated as defiance. The school would then use a range of sanctions, including loss of break time/lunchtime, after school detentions, internal exclusion or in extreme cases, fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Based upon legislation in the *Children Act (1989)*, in serious cases, it may also be appropriate to consider the bullying as a child protection concern if '*there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm*'. Where this is the case, the school must report their concerns to the Local Authority's safeguarding services and may draw on external professionals to support the victim or to tackle issues which have contributed to a child becoming a perpetrator of bullying.

As a last resort, the school may report a bullying issue to the police, particularly if staff feel that the nature of the bullying contravenes the law and other measures have been unsuccessful in preventing its recurrence.

See **Appendix 4** for further information on how the school deals with bullying incidents

8. Recording bullying and evaluating the policy

When bullying of a pupil has been reported, statements will be taken from all relevant parties and stored on file. When it is believed that bullying has occurred, the member of staff will complete a pink or red slip, indicating the type of bullying and the names of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s). A pink slip is used for incidents of poor behaviour that require action by teaching staff, usually middle management. A red slip is used for serious incidents that need immediate action and will normally be dealt with by a member of the senior management team. Information from the pink/red slip will be stored on the School Information Management system (SIMS) and may be included in communication with pupils and parents, such as a meeting or telephone call.

The measures taken and sanctions imposed will be recorded and used to inform pastoral staff of trends, or to indicate which measures are most successful in ensuring that further bullying is prevented.

This anti-bullying policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

9. Making a parental complaint

If a parent is not satisfied with the way a bullying issue has been addressed, the appropriate Head of School (Lower/Upper/Sixth Form) should be contacted to discuss the matter. However, if the appropriate Head of School has already become involved, but the parent is still dissatisfied, then Mrs Reed, the Senior Deputy Head teacher, should be contacted.

10. Strategies for preventing bullying

- PSE (Personal and Social Education) and Citizenship lessons
- Parent Information Evenings e.g. Internet Safety
- Anti-Bullying Week in November
- regular surveys to evaluate the current climate of the school
- Restorative Justice training
- Peer Mentor Scheme
- Peer Mediator Scheme
- Circle of Friends

11. Links with other policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Acceptable Use Policy – Internet Safety
- The Ashcombe School Complaints Procedure

12. Reference documents

Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' Department for Education (July 2017)

Keeping Children Safe In Education - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' Department for Education (September 2016)

Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (March 2015)

Cyberbullying Advice for Headteachers and school staff (Nov 2014)

'Reducing bullying amongst the worst affected' Department for Education 2012

'Prevalence and incidence in the study of antisocial behaviour: definitions and measurements' Olweus, D. In: Klein, M. W. 'Cross-national research in self-reported crime and delinquency' (1989)

'Bullying involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' DCSF 00419-2008 (2008)

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (2014)

Useful Addresses

Anti-Bullying Alliance

National Children's Bureau,
8 Wakley Street,
London
EC1V 7QE
020 7843 1901
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
email:aba@ncb.org.uk

Act Against Bullying
0208 995 9500

www.actagainstbullying.com

Anti-Bullying Campaign

185 Tower Bridge Road
London
SE1 2UF
Tel: 0207 378 1446 (9.30-5.00pm)

Bullying Online

www.bullying.co.uk
Family Lives 0808 800 2222

Childline

Weston House,
42 Curtain Road,
London
EC2A 3NH
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Familyline

PO Box 335
Dorking
Surrey RH4 2YJ
0808 800 5678
www.familyline.org.uk
email: help@familyline.org.uk

Kidscape

2 Grosvenor Gardens
London
SW1W 0DH
0207 730 3300
Helpline: 08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk

NSPCC

42 Curtain Road,
London
EC2A 3NH
0207 825 2500
Helpline for young people: 0800 1111
Helpline for adults worried about a young
person: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

YoungMinds Parents' Helpline

Tel: 0808 802 5544
Email: parents@youngminds.org.uk

Appendix 2

Strategies in creating a Safe to Learn (Anti-bullying) culture

General Strategies

- As an element of the 'Partnership' which they enter on admission to the school, all pupils, and their parents, sign an agreement to show respect for others in the school and that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Liaison will take place with feeder schools and follow-on schools to ensure that a common approach is adopted.
- Provide pupils with strategies to help them understand and take forward the concept of the 'Telling school' – e.g. teach them that it is ok to inform adults of bullying.
- Involve children in the development of anti-bullying work through the School Council, surveys etc.
- Train staff to use a restorative approach when dealing with bullying, for pupils of any age
- Continually reinforce the concept of mutual responsibility – everyone has a responsibility to prevent bullying - including bystanders.
- Ensure that special efforts are made to support and mentor children who join the school later, children with special needs and other vulnerable children.
- Select from a range of strategies which help to create a culture where children are sensitive to needs of others – e.g. Circle Time/Circle of Friends, mentoring, cooperative group work.
- Pupils vulnerable to bullying are identified at an early stage by tutors and monitored closely. Self Esteem/Social Skills classes will be organised if needed.
- Pupils are given the opportunity, either verbally or in writing, to inform the school of any matters of concern through a variety of methods - members of staff, the School Council, mentors and surveys of pupil opinion.
- All subjects encourage tolerance and respect for others through group and pair work and through discussion and debate. The school seeks to raise self-esteem by celebrating achievements of all kinds.
- All staff are made aware of the School's policy and procedures for dealing with bullying incidents.
- A range of supervised extra-curricular activities are available at lunchtimes and after school. Vulnerable children have a 'safe' place to go at lunch times e.g. the Inclusion room.
- External specialists working within school (e.g. Multi Professional Teams) are also encouraged to be vigilant over bullying.
- Bullying as an issue is covered in curriculum areas such as assemblies, tutorial time and PSHE. The approaches adopted in these areas are consistent with the School's Policy on Anti-Bullying and emphasize the responsibility of all to speak out against it.
- Parents are informed, through the policy, of tell-tale signs to look out for and strategies to prevent bullying.
- Any incidents of bullying are logged and analysed annually.

- Communicating a concern is vital and parents or pupils are encouraged to talk to an adult directly or by phone; a dedicated 24hr confidential school telephone line is available (01306 887661)
- Anti bullying charter is displayed in each classroom.

Strategies for specific phases

- On transition to secondary school Peer Mentors are attached to all Year 7 Tutor Groups from induction day to ease transition from Primary to Secondary school. Peer Mentors remain with the groups until the end of Year 8.
- If a new pupil joins the school after Year 7 he/she will be assigned a pupil to act as a 'buddy'.
- Pupils are made familiar with the school's policy on anti-bullying as part of their tutorial programme in Year 7 and this is reinforced throughout the Key Stages.
- Duty staff patrol the School at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Pupils who feel anxious, if they wish, can be supervised either in or around the offices of the Head of Year or Head of School or in the Inclusion Room at lunch-times.
- All pupils are issued with a school planner. There is a page in the planner which outlines the school's anti-bullying charter.
- The School Counsellor is available for 6 hours each week. Pupils can either self-refer or be referred by a member of staff.
- Pupils can seek advice from any member of the pastoral staff e.g. Teaching Assistant, Tutor, Assistant Head of Year, Head of Year, and Head of School.

Appendix 3

The Restorative Approach: A Teacher's Guide

A Restorative Approach to bullying is a counselling method of dealing with the issue and stresses a non-punitive response. It was developed by Barbara Maines, an educational psychologist in Avon, and George Robinson, a former Headteacher, now working with the University of the West of England. It has been used widely in UK schools for many years now and has been adopted by the Surrey Psychological Service as a sound strategy for dealing with bullying.

1. Take an account from the victim and **Really Listen**. The circumstances of bullying are not especially important but the effects are. Ensure that the person conducting the interview is best equipped to do so, the person might be a TA, teacher, member of pastoral team or senior manager, depending upon the offence.
2. Start with a written account, then interview the perpetrator and others - 'Things have been tough for Jo. What do you know about it? What shall we do about it?' (Don't mention bullying or accuse)
3. Interview victim
 - I understand that things aren't going too well for you at the moment and I wanted us to have an opportunity to talk about how you are feeling.
 - Do you want to tell me more?
 - What are your feelings about this?
 - I can understand how angry you must be.
 - How are you coping?
 - Is there anything else you'd like to say?
 - I know it's been difficult for you to share that with me and I'm really pleased that you have been able to.
4. Convene a meeting with the perpetrator(s), about 6-8 in a group at the most. One or two of these should be the chief instigators and the others should include observers or those who collude by failing to intervene.
 - (a) Explain to the group that there is a problem for Jo and recount her story so that her distress is described. *I've asked to meet with you all because I'm particularly concerned about Jo. From what I understand of the situation, Jo is feeling really upset. She is afraid of going around the site.*
 - (b) The important thing to remember is NOT TO ATTRIBUTE BLAME but to state that members of the group are responsible and can do something about it. *I know that members of this group are responsible for some of what Jo is feeling and I also know that you can do something about it. I want us to find ways of making things better for Jo.*
 - (c) Ask all the group members if they can make some suggestions about the way in which they might help. List all the ideas and LEAVE IT THERE. It's really important not to go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour. *"I wonder if you can think of some strategies to help solve this situation."*
"Feels like a hard thing to have said. I'm really pleased that you've been brave enough to share this. How are you going to do that?"
 - (d) End by arranging a meeting with each group member individually in about a week to find out how things are going. *"I'm really pleased with the way you have all worked through this situation and all the ideas that you have come up with. What I'd like to do is to meet in about a week to find out how things are going."*

Dealing with Bullying Incidents



Any instances of bullying should be reported to a member of staff; usually the tutor, Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year at the earliest opportunity.



The member of staff will listen to the concern and will take brief notes with dates, times, locations & names of those involved.



The member of staff will assess the situation and will recommend a course of action to the pupil and /or parent. This course of action may include referring the issue to pastoral staff e.g. the tutor or the Head of Year.



Support strategies will be offered to the pupil and, if applicable, the parent.



If it is agreed, there will be follow up with the perpetrator or a 'watching brief'. A member of the pastoral team (usually the tutor/Assistant Head of Year /Head of Year) will interview the perpetrator(s) if appropriate.



A 'no-blame' approach may be adopted but a firm message that bullying must stop (victim and supporter can be present, as well as perpetrator) will be given. The member of staff will make a brief record noting agreed outcome for the files of all pupils involved. The bullying incident will be recorded on SIMS - behaviour log.



If the bullying re-occurs or the incident is of a more serious nature, once again all parties will be interviewed with a record of the meeting and agreed outcomes made and placed in the file of all pupils involved. The bullying incident will be recorded on SIMS behaviour log.



The Head of School would be informed and consulted at an early stage. Sanctions will be applied and further support strategies put in place if bullying behaviour continues. An outline of the action taken by the school will be given to the victim. It is advisable to ensure all parents are kept informed in instances of 'repeat' bullying.



In cases of persistent, serious bullying behaviour, the Deputy Head and Headteacher will be informed.



Internal exclusion and/or exclusion will be considered. Internal support services or external agencies may also be involved in working with perpetrator(s) and victim(s).

Wherever possible the pupils involved (Perpetrators of bullying and Victims) will be reconciled, using a restorative approach. Restorative Practices will be applied in seeking a resolution and in more complex cases a Restorative Justice Conference will be convened.

- Brief details of all bullying incidents, with names of those involved, are recorded. (Use of SIMS to record bullying on pupil file).
- Senior Pastoral team will analyse incident logs annually to identify any patterns.
- An annual report will be provided to Governors and Local Authority.
- The school Complaints Procedure should be followed in the event of a parent being dissatisfied.

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying

Who is this advice for?

This advice is for parents and carers about cyberbullying. It provides advice and information about how they can protect their child from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

Overview

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Cyberbullying can also involve adults; even though technology has provided wonderful opportunities for both teaching and learning, it has led to some teachers becoming the victims of internet messaging that undermines or ridicules them. It is important that parents make clear that this is not acceptable behaviour and lead by example. What was once a conversation at the school gate between small groups of parents and carers can now become a conversation with perhaps hundreds of “friends” on social networking sites, permanent, with a large audience, and easily shared. Whilst parents and carers have the right to be critical of decisions made by schools, or even individual staff members, they should raise concerns in an appropriate way and not become abusive, or libellous. Open conversations on social networking sites are not private and can easily be reported to school staff, even if it was not the intention to share their views directly.

Social networking

Young people routinely access social media and much of their social lives are online. This can create a false sense of security; for example, chatting online feels different from chatting face to face. It can be easier to say and reveal things that wouldn't be said face to face; or to be cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. It is important for young people to remember that there are offline consequences to online behaviour.

Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted online whereas if said face to face they could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context all help to ensure that comments are taken the right way. This is not the case online. We also know that increasingly younger children are signing up to social network sites and may not have the maturity to handle their online identity in a safe and responsible way.

Social networking can increase existing social pressures and reinforce a sense of isolation; for instance, by people purposefully not liking a young person's status update or photo so they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying often involves a large audience and this increases the pressure.

Parents and carers need to understand the way young people communicate with others, and the potential risks.

Asking their child simply not to use technology is not a realistic way to prevent or react to cyberbullying.

[Internet Matters](#) provides an overview of cyber-bullying in more detail and [NSPCC - bullying and cyberbullying prevention](#)

Parents and carers have a challenging job. They need to know what their children are doing online and also help them to do it in a safe way. With technology changing on a day-to-day basis, the best way to stay informed is for parents to be involved. [Thinkuknow](#) provides helpful tips on letting your child teach you.

Set boundaries

A good way to supervise children's internet access and set boundaries about what they can and cannot do online is to create an agreement with them. If a child breaks the rules, restrict internet access for an agreed period of time.

[Thinkuknow](#) provides helpful tips on agreeing and setting boundaries

Ensure you use the privacy settings, parental controls and built in internet safety features provided by the major

internet service providers. The *UK Safer Internet Centre* has guides for [parental controls](#)

For parents and carers experiencing any internet safety issues with their children, The *Parent Zone* provides a national helpline service at - help@theparentzone.co.uk and [The Parent Zone - help](#)

Being involved and talking to children

Social Networks have a minimum age restriction, usually age thirteen. Parents should talk to their children about the reasons behind the age restriction as they are there for a reason. Accessing such sites too early can expose children to bullying.

It is also very important to ensure children and young people feel comfortable about telling their parents things that have happened online. Talking to their children will help parents to understand the ways in which they are using the internet, social media and their mobile phone. Talking to children about responsible behaviour is important as sometimes children who are victims of cyberbullying may also be involved in cyberbullying others. Ensure they know they can go and talk to an adult or parent if they are being bullied and need support. How parents talk to their children will depend on their age. *Childnet* gives more detailed information about talking to your child and *antibullyingpro* provides practical advice for parents

Advice for children

The following are some things that parents may wish to consider teaching their children about using the internet safely:

- Make sure you use the privacy settings.
- Always respect others – be careful what you say online.
- Be careful what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.
- Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations.
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher, or the anti-bullying co-ordinator or call a helpline like *Childline* on 08001111 in confidence.
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.
- While you are on your mobile phone make sure you also pay attention to your surroundings.

Possible signs of cyberbullying

It is not always easy to spot the signs of cyberbullying as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different from other forms of bullying. Be alert to a change in your child's behaviour, for example:

- Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone;
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media.
- Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or outraged.
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and school mates.
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Low self-esteem.

What to do if you suspect a child is being cyberbullied

If you suspect a child or young person is being harassed or bullied either over the internet or via mobile phone, ask them to give you details. If your child tells you that someone is bothering them online, take it seriously.

Offer practical as well as emotional support. Print out the evidence for future reference. Talk to a teacher at your child's school if other pupils at the schools are involved. [The Parent Zone-Top tips if your child is being bullied](#)

Support for children who are bullied

School staff should support all pupils who are bullied and develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. Children and young people who have been a victim of images or videos of a sexual nature being uploaded and shared will be particularly vulnerable and in need of support to return to school.

Cyberbullying on social networks can be upsetting and really knock their confidence. Childline has produced guidance for young people on building their confidence after online bullying available at: [Childline - Building confidence after online bullying](#)

It is also important to involve your child in resolving the issues as this can help to strengthen their self-confidence and restore a sense of emotional safety.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has helpfully put together a fact sheet outlining the range of support that is available to schools, parents, carers and young people from the anti-bullying sector [advice and support from the anti-bullying sector](#)

Facebook has produced a support sheet [Empowering Parents and Families](#) which gives guidance on what to do if you child is being bullied.

Getting offensive content taken down

If online content is upsetting and inappropriate, and the person or people responsible are known, you need to ensure they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and request they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or refuses to take down the material you should contact the social networking site directly to make a report and request the content is taken down. The material posted may be in breach of the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can therefore be removed.

Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party. In cases of mobile phone abuse, where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly.

Before you contact a web service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is, for example by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address. If you are requesting they take down material that is not illegal, be clear to point out how it breaks the site's terms and conditions. Where the material is suspected of being illegal you should contact the police directly.

NSPCC Netware: Your guide to the social network your kids use – [stay up to date and keep your child safe in today's digital world](#)

Contact details for social networking sites:

[The UK Safer Internet Centre](#) works with social networking sites to disseminate their safety and reporting tools.

Social networking site	Useful links
Ask.fm	Read Ask.fm's 'terms of service' Read Ask.fm's safety tips Reporting on Ask.fm: You do not need to be logged into the site (i.e. a user) to report. When you move your mouse over any post on someone else's profile, you will see an option to like the post and also a drop down arrow which allows you to report the post.
BBM	Read BBM rules and safety
Facebook	Read Facebook's rules Report to Facebook Facebook Safety Centre
Instagram	Read Instagram's rules Report to Instagram Instagram Safety Centre
Kik Messenger	Read Kik's rules Report to Kik Kik Help Centre
Snapchat	Read Snapchat rules Report to Snapchat Read Snapchat's safety tips for parents
Tumblr	Read Tumblr's rules Report to Tumblr by email If you email Tumblr take a screen shot as evidence and attach it to your email
Twitter	Read Twitter's rules Report to Twitter
Vine	Read Vine's rules Contacting Vine and reporting
YouTube	Read YouTube's rules Report to YouTube YouTube Safety Centre

Mobile phones

All UK mobile phone providers have malicious or nuisance call, text or picture message centres set up and have procedures in place to deal with such instances. They will help you to change the number of the person being bullied if necessary. If you want to prosecute the perpetrator contact the police. The mobile provider will work closely with the police and can usually trace calls for them.

Some service providers such as Vodafone produce annual magazines for parents and carers ([Digital Parenting](#)), giving information and top tips for keeping your children safe online including cyberbullying.

Service provider	From your mobile	Pay as you go	Pay monthly contracts
O2	4445 or 202	08705 678 678	0870 241 0202
VodaFone	191	03333 040 191	03333 048 069
3	333	08433 733 333	08433 733 333
EE	150	0800 956 6000	0800 956 6000
Orange	150	07973 100 450	07973 100 150
T-Mobile	150	07953 966 150	07953 966 150
Virgin	789	0345 6000 789	0345 6000 789
BT		08000 328 751	08000 328 751

Organisations that provide support to parents and carers and children

- [The Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- [CEOP](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Childnet](#)
- [The Diana Award](#)
- [Internetmatters](#)
- [Kidscape](#)
- [Get connected](#)
- [NSPCC](#)
- [The Parent Zone](#)
- [Thinkuknow](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)