Personal Development Resources

Safeguarding - Cyberbullying Awareness

Cyberbullying Awareness

Bullying and The Digital World

Technology in every day life

Information and communications technology (ICT) is part of our lives. We use it every day for study, work, entertainment, shopping and getting in touch with family and friends.

The world of work and business expects us to develop skills to use ICT confidently to promote improvements. It's one of the finding information, sharing ideas and working with other people.

And like everything else we've ever invented from the bow and arrow onwards, it has to be used safely and responsibly. As well as opportunities, there are also risks that we need to be aware of and guard against.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through your mobile phone. Websites like Facebook, Instagram, Bebo, YouTube,Twitter, MySpace, instant messaging on MSN and gaming forums can be great fun. But what do you do when things go wrong?

Cyberbullying is rife on the internet and most young people will experience it at some time.

Problems include:

- Stolen identity
- Threats
- Blackmail
- Rumours and gossip
- Abusive comments
- Nasty pictures

Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying affects people from any age or walk of life, including children, teens and adults who all feel very distressed and alone when being bullied online. Cyberbullying can make you feel totally overwhelmed which can result in many feeling embarrassed that they are going through such a devastating time, and not knowing what support is available to them. Many young people feel unable to confide in an adult because they feel ashamed and wonder whether they will be judged, told to ignore it or close their account which they might not want to do.

For many cyberbullying affects their everyday lives and is a constant source of distress and worry. With mobile technology being so freely available it is an ongoing issue and one that is relentless. Not only does it go on after school, college or work has finished, but it then carries through into the next day and the cycle continues. It has been well documented that cyberbullying has resulted in tragic events including suicide, and self-harm and clearly, more needs to be done in order to protect vulnerable children and adults from online bullying.

Safeguarding: What to do

If you see something inappropriate

If you ever come across anything on the internet, whether it's on a social networking website or anywhere else, where people are making suggestions to you that make you feel uncomfortable or upset, please tell your parents or another adult.

CEOP (The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) investigates cases of sex abuse and grooming on the internet. Grooming is where people make friends with you and try to involve you in inappropriate activities. In the UK this behaviour is a criminal offence. You, your parents or anyone else who is concerned, can report incidents by clicking the red button on the top right hand corner of the CEOP website.

Safeguarding: What to do

How to report bullying or abuse on social media

Facebook – Facebook does not tolerate bullying and say they will remove bullying content when they become aware of it and may disable the account of anyone who bullies or attacks another. You can report bullying on Facebook using the report links which appear near the content itself.

Twitter – If you receive a tweet or reply that you don't like, you can unfollow that person. If they continue to contact you, you can block the user (just click on the head icon on their profile and select block user). Read more about Twitter's advise on online bullying. You can also read more about how to stay safe on Twitter.

YouTube – Flag a video you think is inappropriate (click on the little flag bottom right of the video) and YouTube will take a look at it to see whether it breaks their terms of use. If it does then they will remove it. YouTube rules say you can't upload videos with hate content, nudity, or graphic violence and if you find one on someone else's space, click on the video to flag it as inappropriate.

Safeguarding: What to do

Other points of reference

Get Safe Online: awareness and advice www.getsafeonline.org

Children International: awareness and advice www.childnet-int.org

Digizen: advice and resources www.digizen.org

Think U Know: awareness and advice www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Safeguarding: What to do

Keep it private

Don't post anything on a social networking site which gives your real name, address, school, phone number or which will allow a stranger to contact you in real life. Make sure you don't identify your friends either.

Don't upload anything that might embarrass you at a later date. You might not realise it but things you post on the internet now could come back to cause problems for you later on, for instance when you go for an interview for college or a job. If you have a webcam never be pressured into taking pictures of yourself that you wouldn't want other people to see.

If you're using a shared computer at college, in an internet café or library then you'll stay logged on even when you close the browser. So don't forget to log off when you've finished the session.