Introduction To Cyberbullying

Some people can find socialising and making friends a lot easier in an online context through social media, forums, blogs, phone messaging apps or online gaming platforms but this comes with some risk.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place in a cyber context E.g., messaging apps, social media, or gaming platforms. It is done with intent to offend, humiliate, threaten, harass, or abuse someone.

Some examples of cyberbullying include:

- Sharing embarrassing photos of someone online without their consent.
- Sending abusive messages or threats online.
- Coercing someone into sharing images of themselves.
- Spreading malicious rumours.

Cyberbullying can have devastating long-term effects so where possible prevention is the best course of action.

Some ideas to consider to prevent cyberbullying taking place include:

- Monitoring or supervising online activity.
- Set privacy restrictions, for example if they have a personal profile on any social platform, you could set this to private or hidden.
- Consider not using real names online. However, do this with caution as some people may see this as an opportunity to act inappropriately online with no repercussions because they think their identity is hidden.
- Set safety measures such as parental settings, blocking pop ups or using filters.
- Talk to the person before they start going online
- Teach them the specific risks involved and offer advice on what to do if they find themselves in a bullying situation.
  For example, how to block someone.



- Together explore what a good friend is and what a healthy relationship looks like: Consider looking at boundaries in relationships. Some people can be vulnerable online and easily manipulated into thinking people are their friends. For support with this, have a look at our 'relationship circle' information sheet.

- Set clear time limits.

- Be aware of age restrictions: Games and apps such as Facebook have age restrictions in place.

- Familiarise yourself with what programmes or apps the person uses: Find out about safety functions. There are also apps designed to hide content from parents. Research and familiarise yourself with this so you can both find evidence of bullying and intercept any bullying behaviour.

- Always keep and save any evidence of cyberbullying. Screen shots, dates, and times, names of users are all important.

Where should you report cyberbullying to?

- Online gaming: You can report cyberbullying directly on the platform on most gaming sites.

- Social media: You can report cyberbullying directly on the platform on most social media sites.

- School and College: All educational settings have bullying policies in place. If a person is being bullied by somebody at their education setting, speak to the school, college directly, even if it's just a suspicion at this stage.

- Police: If the bullying targets a person's disability, ethnicity, or gender, for example, this is classed as a hate crime and should be reported to the police.



