Cyber Bullying Guidance for Pupils ...

- If you feel you are being bullied by email, text or online, do talk to someone you trust.
- Never send any bullying or threatening messages. Anything you write and send could be read by an adult.
- Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- Why not log into a chatroom with a different user ID or nickname? That way the bully won't know who you are. You could change your mobile phone number and only give it out to close friends.
- Contact the service provider (Mobile Phone Company / your Internet provider) to tell them about the bullying. They may be able to track down the bully.
- Use blocking software - you can block instant messages from certain people or use mail filters to block emails from specific email addresses.
- Don’t reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails - this could make matters worse. It also lets the bullying people know that they have found a ‘live’ phone number or email address. They may get bored quite quickly if you ignore them.
- Don’t give out your personal details online - if you’re in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- Don’t forward abusive texts or emails or images to anyone. You could be breaking the law just by forwarding them. If they are about you, keep them as evidence. If they are about someone else, delete them and don’t reply to the sender.
- Don’t ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.
- Remember that sending abusive or threatening messages is against the law.
Staying Safe With Your Mobile Phone

Although it’s nice to have your mobile phone handy to chat to friends, don’t flash it about in public because you risk having it stolen. If there’s a lock facility on it choose a secret number so that the keypad is locked when you’re not using it. If someone you don’t know asks to borrow your phone to make a quick call tell them that it’s out of credit and only accepts incoming calls. Be careful when giving out your telephone number. Mobile phones are relatively inexpensive and if you start getting abusive calls or text messages then it might be better to get another SIM card so that the bullies can’t contact you.

If you receive abusive messages, keep a note of the times and dates they are received. Don’t reply to them or delete them but tell your parents so that they can make a complaint to the police. If there are a series of calls or the calls are part of a bigger picture of bullying then this may amount to harassment which is an offence under the 1997 Harassment Act. BT recommends that you stay calm and try not to show emotion. Don’t give your phone number when you answer a call, just say “hello”.

Every time a mobile phone is switched on or off it sends a signal to the nearest mast and although the caller may have concealed their number from you, this is information which phone companies will have on their system and it’s easy for the police to find out the culprit’s phone number. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced.

You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller’s number. See if you recognise it. If you don’t, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don’t leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again.

In recent years, a mobile phone database has been created to block stolen and lost mobile phones so that they will not work on any UK mobile network, therefore making a stolen phone worthless. A note of the IMEI number of the handset (a unique 15-digit serial number) should be kept in a safe place. The IMEI number can be found by looking behind the battery of the phone or by keying in *#06#. The IMEI number of lost or stolen phones should be reported to the network operator or by calling 08701 123 123. The theft should also be reported to the police. The Immobilise Phone Crime website [http://www.immobilise.com] provides further details.

Never give any information about yourself unless you are certain you know the caller. A telephone answering machine can be useful at home, leave it on all the time and then when the person starts speaking, if you know them, you can pick up the phone. A genuine caller will speak first. A malicious caller will probably hang up.

How Mobile Phone Operators Are Combating Cyber Bullying

If you get your service from BT and receive a malicious or nuisance call and would like advice, call Freephone 0800 666 700. A recorded message will tell you what to do if you need more help.

You can also call free on 150 for personal advice and information about how BT can help you tackle the problem. The service is available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday. If the problem continues then contact your nearest BT bureau on Freephone 0900 661 441 during office hours. The bureau deals exclusively with malicious and nuisance calls.

BT may suggest tracing future calls or changing your telephone number. Almost all malicious calls can now be traced whether they come from private, public or even mobile phones, anywhere in the country.

A dedicated team of specially-trained BT people will work with the police so it will be helpful to any subsequent prosecution of the malicious caller. If you keep a written record of the calls, making a note of the date, time of day, what was said and whether you heard any background noise.

Tesco Mobile has a 24-hour service for young people being cyber-bullied. Just text ‘bully’ to 60000 to receive advice and support. The cost of texts is donated to NCH.

The specially trained team at O2’s Nuisance Call Bureau can be contacted by email or by calling the Customer Service Department on 0870 5214 000. O2 also has useful online leaflets. See www.o2.com/cr/resource/resource_child_protection.asp

Vodafone has a RespondPlus service, where an operator will answer your calls for you; take a message and text it to you.
Text / Video-Messaging

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you’ve changed your phone number. If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider (such as Orange, O2, Vodafone or T-Mobile).

Don’t reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone-bullying. Visit their website for details.

Don’t delete messages from cyber-bullies. You don’t have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you’ve received.

Chatrooms or Instant Messaging (IM) Email

- If you receive a nasty or abusive email (known as being flamed), don’t reply. If it’s from someone you think you know, like someone at school, they’ll want some kind of reaction, just like they would if they were standing in front of you and bullying you. Don’t give them the satisfaction of replying, and they’ll probably stop.

- Never reply to someone you don’t know, even if there’s an option to ‘unsubscribe’. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

- Give yourself an alias that doesn’t give out anything about your age, gender or location.

- Think about what you write - it is very easy for people to get the wrong idea about what you write or how you write it.

- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.

- If they don’t stop then you need to find out from where the email is coming. Using an email client like Outlook or Outlook Express, clicking the right mouse button over an email will reveal lots of details about from where and who the email came. You can then get your parents to contact the school or the service provider of the sender of the email.

- The email can also come from people that you don’t know, (known as spamming) - email addresses are fairly easy for companies to obtain on the internet, using software called email harvesters. They are also surprisingly easy for specialist computer programs to guess. Under no circumstances should you reply to these types of email, even if they have a Click here and stop receiving this email link - this will just confirm your email address as a real one. The individual sending it can then sell or pass it on to other people and you’ll be flooded with even more junk and abusive emails.

- You can delete the emails, but if the situation becomes serious, you should save them or print them off so that, if you do need to take action, you have some evidence.

Remember - you don’t have to put up with it … Tell your teacher or parent …
Web Bullying

If the bullying is on a school website, tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face.

If you don’t know the owner of the website, you can use a specialist search engine to find the owner of the website, for example http://www.easywhois.com/. This will help you and your school to identify the author.

Three Steps To Stay Out Of Harms Way

1. Respect other people - online and off. Don’t spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.

2. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.

3. ‘Do as you would be done by.’ Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You’re responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don’t distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

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