



Guidance to help you as tutors, teachers and lecturers to understand the issue, to know how to deal with it, and know your responsibilities

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is supporting the delivery of new government guidance on tackling bullying in the further education sector, and helping colleges understand how they need to respond. Our Anti-Bullying Week (16-20 November 2009) provides a timely launch platform for the new guidance, with the emphasis on this year's campaign, '**Stay safe in cyberspace**'. The theme addresses the very real issue of cyberbullying - bullying that takes place through the misuse of mobile phones and the internet.

The following information will help you as tutors, lecturers and teachers, to be aware of the issue and to know how to deal with it in the best way possible. Of course, tutors will have more of a pastoral duty than lecturers, but embracing a 'whole college approach' will help to safeguard all your students' wellbeing.



Technology – a way of life for young people

It is clear that today's young people are growing up in a world very different from their parents and carers. Mobile phones, digital media, computers and the internet are a taken-for-granted element in young people's lives. For them, technology isn't just about keeping in touch; it is a way of developing their identity, socialising and group interaction. However, when misuse occurs and bullying takes place, these previously enjoyable activities can leave young people feeling alone, misunderstood and victimised.

Cyberbullying – a click can hurt as much as a kick

Any form of bullying is unacceptable. Intimidation, threatening behaviour, setting out to cause physical or emotional hurt in any form cannot be tolerated. Cyberbullying is defined as *the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else*. Just as harmful, cyberbullying can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, and differs from other forms of bullying in significant ways:

- It can be 24/7 - invading the home and personal space
- It may be perceived as anonymous, the actual identity of the perpetrator can be hidden
- Participants can unconsciously also be perpetrators without understanding the consequences
- The circulation of electronic messages is difficult to control
- The size of the audience can potentially be huge

TAKING ACTION

Make sure you are familiar with the environment

Whilst it isn't necessary for you to know about every new application or site, it is important to have an up-to-date broad understanding of the different ways that young people are using – or abusing – technologies. The following table provides a useful checkpoint to help you understand the positive and negative uses of technology, to know what to be aware of - and when you may need to intervene.

Technology: positive & negative use

Stay safe in
cyberspace



Technology	Positive use	Misuse: Cyberbullying
Mobile phones 	Keeping in touch by voice or text, taking and sending film and pictures, listening to music, playing games, going online and sending emails. Useful in emergency situations and helping students to develop their growing sense of independence.	Sending hurtful or harmful calls or texts, including threats, intimidation and harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating images, videoing other people being harassed and/or, circulating these to internet sites or to other mobile phones.
Instant Messenger (IM) 	Text or voice conversation in real-time (live) with friends online. A quick and effective way of keeping in touch - even whilst working on other things.	Sending inappropriate, upsetting, or offensive content. Accessing another person's account to forward rude or insulting messages via their contacts list.
Chatrooms and message boards 	Forums where groups of people around the world text or chat live about common interests. For young people, this is an opportunity to meet new people and explore issues which they may be uncomfortable about discussing in person.	Sending unpleasant, threatening, anonymous messages. Groups of people intimidating or ignoring individuals. Making friends under false pretences in order to solicit personal information for misuse, e.g. publicising personal facts or blackmail.
Email 	Sending electronic letters, pictures and files quickly and cheaply anywhere in the world.	Sending messages which attack or threaten. Forwarding unsuitable content such as images and video clips, or computer viruses. Hacking someone's account to forward personal emails or delete important emails.
Webcams 	Taking pictures or recording messages. Being able to talk and see someone live on your computer screen. Useful for video conferencing and bringing far-off places to your computer screen.	Making and sending inappropriate content. Persuading or threatening someone to act in inappropriate ways; using unsuitable recordings to manipulate another person.
Social network sites 	Socialising with peers and making new friends within online communities. Allows young people to be creative, such as publishing music online, personalising homepages and profiles, creating and uploading content.	Posting offensive or abusive comments, humiliating images or video. Hacking account details to send derisive messages, to delete information or make private information public. Groups excluding individuals. Creating fake profiles in order to bully, harass or implicate another person.
Video hosting sites 	Accessing useful educational, entertaining and original video content; uploading your own video files.	Posting embarrassing, humiliating film of the target.
Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) 	College site, usually available from home and college, created for tracking and recording student assignments, tests, activities. Can include message boards, chat and IM facilities.	Posting inappropriate messages or images. Hacking a target's account in order to post inappropriate comments or delete assignment documents.
Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds 	Live text or voice chat during online gaming between players across the world; or on handheld consoles with people in the same local area. Allows young people to create an avatar: a figure that represents them in the virtual world.	Making abusive or derogatory remarks. Players may target weaker or less experienced users, for instance by repeatedly 'killing' their characters. Forwarding unwanted messages to other devices in the immediate vicinity.

Reference: DCSF/Childnet International www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications



Preventing cyberbullying

Everyone needs to work together to raise awareness of cyberbullying and how it can be stopped. Lecturers and teachers, whilst not having full pastoral duties, can still support tutors deliver the Every Child Matters outcomes by helping students to feel safe and supported. There are some key steps that you can take:

- Talk to your students about how they use technology, their experiences, and concerns; this provides a context for discussing online safety and a starting point for dealing with misuse.
- Make sure your students are aware of the impact of cyberbullying and how it is different from face-to-face bullying.
- Let them know that you are there to help students if cyberbullying occurs in and out of the college environment.
- Familiarise yourself with your college's anti-bullying policies and practices and ensure you are able to signpost students to the right place for further support.

Investigating and responding to incidents of cyberbullying

Your college anti-bullying policy should provide guidance on how to deal with instances of bullying, including cyberbullying. You will need to work with your anti-bullying co-ordinator or support services team to investigate and respond to any incidents or signpost students where to go for information and advice. Depending on your role, you will have differing levels of responsibility but should be aware of college procedures and support mechanisms.



Investigation – conducted by your anti-bullying coordinator or support services team:

- Finding out who is responsible: there are ways of identifying where the case of cyberbullying was initiated. In cases where the identity is not known, look at college ICT logs; conduct witness interviews; contact service providers; involve the police to trace calls or to look at the data of another user.
- Capture and keep the evidence: all incidents should be recorded, by saving mobile phone messages, printing screen grabs, etc.
- Has the law been broken? Bullying, including cyberbullying, can constitute a criminal offence. Depending on the severity of the allegation, the police may need to be involved.

Response – with the help of your anti-bullying coordinator or support services team, you can take steps such as:

- Talk to the target to assure them that they have done the right thing in coming forward, and provide emotional support.
- Advise the target to change passwords and access codes, to delete the bully from friends and contacts lists, change their mobile phone number, and if necessary, report the incident to the service provider. Involve the police if the offence is of an illegal nature.
- Try to contain the incident by removing the offending material from circulation if possible; enlist the person responsible for ICT to help you do this.
- Talk to the person participating in the bullying behaviour to educate them about the impact of their actions and encourage them to change their attitude and behaviour. You may feel that imposing limitations of use on college ICT equipment or removing their right to bring a mobile phone into the college environment is appropriate.




For further information and useful links go to **Anti-Bullying Alliance:**
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk


More information on Cyberbullying

 **Childnet:** for information and materials on a range of online safety aspects such as social networking, being a good digital citizen, and cyberbullying. www.childnet.com

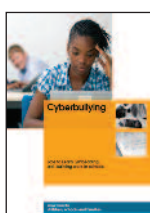
 **Digizen:** visit www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/overview, for more information on cyberbullying.

 **CEOP (The Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre):** hosts the Young people's online charter and is responsible for safety on the internet. There is advice for parents and carers and for young people. www.ceop.gov.uk

Government guidance

 **Safe from Bullying: in further education**
This guidance is aimed at Student Services and other Further Education (FE) College staff. It outlines the possible bullying that might occur in FE colleges and describes steps to prevent it and respond to it effectively.

This document is part of a suite of guidance on preventing bullying outside schools that includes guidance on tackling bullying in various settings. www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00363

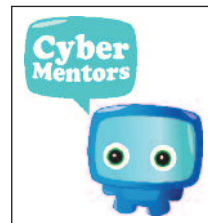
 **Safe to Learn: Cyberbullying**
This specialist guidance on tackling cyberbullying forms part of DCSF's suite of guidance on embedding anti-bullying work in schools. Other documents in this suite include an overview and guidance on tackling homophobic bullying; bullying around racism, religion and culture; and bullying involving children with special educational needs and disabilities. www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying

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. Whenever and wherever children need us, we'll be there. 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 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 for teachers go to: www.cybermentors.org.uk



Connexions Direct (CDX)
CDX offers advice, support and information for young people aged 13 to 19 on a wide range of issues relevant to their age group including bullying. CDX provide a dedicated website and **helpline** where young people can access information, advice and support via the telephone, text messaging, webchat and email. www.connexions-direct.com



CEOP (The Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre)
(CEOP) Centre is dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children. CEOP also provides help and advice on cyberbullying and maintains a website for children and young people about staying safe online. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

