

## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

<b>Date for renewal/updates/review</b>	October 2022
<b>Named person responsible for monitoring</b>	Deputy Headteacher
<b>Agreed by Governing Body</b>	October 2019

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 A team of SWR Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (10 students from Years 7-10) have defined bullying as:

**The continuous and intentional harassment towards another individual or group, either physically, verbally or indirectly.**

- 1.2 Bullying occurs when people deliberately hurt, harass or intimidate someone else; of those taking part in the Annual Bullying Survey 2017\* 54% of 12-20 year olds said they had been bullied at some point.

The Diana Award Anti-Bullying identifies 3 main types of Bullying:

#### a) Physical Bullying

'The repeated negative use of body contact to intentionally hurt others'

*Examples include: Kicking, punching, pinching, slapping, pushing, poking, biting*

#### b) Verbal Bullying

'The repeated negative use of speech or verbal gestures, to intentionally hurt others'

*Examples include: Hurtful words, offensive language, swearing, discriminatory language, threats, teasing, belittling, sarcasm*

#### c) Indirect Bullying

'The repeated negative use of actions which are neither verbal nor physical to intentionally hurt others'

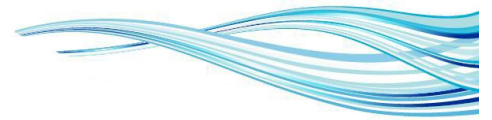
*Examples include: Isolating someone, rumours, sharing secrets, cyber-bullying, damaging/taking someone's property, intimidation, manipulation, coercion*

- 1.3 Bullying can also take many forms:

- Racist and Extremist Bullying: Where victims are singled out because of the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their ethnic grouping or by their religious or cultural practices.
- Homophobic and Biphobic Bullying: Where victims are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual

\* DitchtheLabel.org (The Annual Bullying Survey 2017)

\*\* <http://www.abqm-uk.com> (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)



- Transphobic or Gender Variant Bullying: Bullying based on prejudice or negative attitudes, views or beliefs about trans people. Victims can be trans, those questioning their gender identity or those who do not conform to gender stereotypes.
- Sexualised Bullying: Where victims are subject to unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching or abusive comments.
- Cyber Bullying: Bullying that takes place on the Internet; this can happen in 3 main ways:
  - By using e-mail
  - By targeting someone deliberately through the use of social networking sites
  - By somebody setting up a site with the intention to 'victimise' an individual or group of people

1.4 Research shows that certain groups are more vulnerable to being bullied; specifically:

- Children with learning difficulties, special educational needs or disabilities.
- Looked after children and those in the care system; those from lower income families
- Children identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender
- Children from ethnic minorities, different cultures and religions

1.5 Recent research indicates that having a specific policy helps to combat bullying if:

- everyone knows what the policy is
- the policy is applied consistently
- everyone accepts and believes in the policy.

1.6 The universal nature, indeed the normality, of bullying should not obscure its effects on:

- the victims of bullying
- the bullies themselves
- the silent majority who are not involved

It may mean that bullying is all too easily overlooked, not least because those who are victims of it and/or those who witness it are reluctant to come forward.



## 2. **Bullying Policy: Aims**

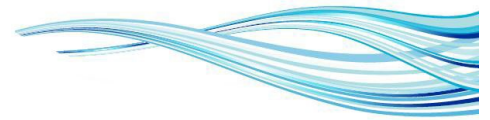
- 2.1 The policy aims to promote an environment which is free of the fear of threat or intimidation by:
- having a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying
  - ensuring that all students accept that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated
  - raising awareness of all in the school community that whenever bullying occurs it must be dealt with as effectively as possible, that it must not be ignored and that the prevention of bullying is everyone's responsibility.
  - promoting a safe and caring atmosphere in which students can work freely and are able to come forward when bullying occurs, without fear of retaliation
  - identifying ways in which bullying can be prevented
  - indicating ways in which bullies and their victims are dealt with
  - reassuring parents and the wider community that bullying will be dealt with as effectively as possible within the school.
- 2.2 The school's policy on bullying is consistent with the aims of the school generally and the aims of the wider policy on Behaviour for Learning.
- 2.3 In all cases of bullying, the safeguarding of all students involved is paramount and safeguarding policy and procedures must be applied.
- 2.4 The policy was formulated and agreed by the Anti-Bullying Strategy Group, comprising of students, parents, staff and governors.

## 3. **Preventative Measures and Education**

- 3.1 The school seeks to publicise to parents its approach to bullying whenever a suitable opportunity arises. Reference is made to this as part of the presentation of the main aims of the school at meetings of prospective parents during the school year. New intake students are made aware of the school's policy on bullying during information sessions held in the primary school before transfer at 11+.
- 3.2 Opportunities are created wherever possible for students to talk about the nature of bullying, amongst themselves and with staff. This may be on an informal basis or more formally as part of a planned curriculum programme of study. Discussion of aspects of bullying takes place in several areas of the curriculum such as drama; including role-play, and pastoral and PSHE programmes across the whole age range in the school; this includes consideration of issues such as social relationships, change of expectations on transfer to secondary school, peer group pressures and matters relating to race and gender.

Other opportunities to educate and promote Anti-bullying include:

- School assemblies
- Tutor time activities and discussions
- Anti-bullying week
- External organisations and individuals
- Anti-bullying notice boards around school
- Newsletter and emails



- 3.3 The school seeks to involve where relevant the wider community in its approach to bullying, particularly in the publicising of ways of preventing bullying amongst young people in society generally and the school. This may involve liaison with the local community police officer, governors, parent's association, education welfare service, school medical service, etc.
- 3.4 The school has trained student Anti-bullying Ambassadors (Diana Award Anti-bullying training) who help educate and promote Anti-bullying throughout the student body. Their activities include:
- Organising activities and events during Anti-bullying week
  - Upkeep of Anti-bullying notice boards
  - Presentation of assemblies and training to students, parents and staff
  - The education and promotion of Anti-bullying in the wider community
- 3.5 The school has committed to achieving the Anti-bullying Quality Mark (Bronze)\*\* and has established an Anti-bullying Strategy Group (ABSG) to develop, monitor and evaluate activities and strategies within school. The group is represented by students, parents, staff and governors and is overseen by the Deputy Headteacher.

## 4. Implementation of the policy

- 4.1 The school's attitude to bullying is very clear. Under no circumstances is bullying of any kind tolerated. Students are encouraged to come forward and approach staff, or an older student or parent if they find this difficult who will then speak to a member of staff on their behalf, when bullying involving themselves or others is suspected. The school will invariably consider the most serious sanctions and punishments available for those found to be responsible for bullying.
- 4.2 All students are made aware that bullying is considered to be a serious breach of school rules and is contrary to the standards of reasonable behaviour. Importantly, an attempt is made to ensure that all students know that the school cares about bullying and will act swiftly and firmly when it is reported.
- 4.3 Students are made aware through discussion with Form Tutors, Heads of Year and Pastoral Managers what constitutes bullying (see section 1.1). The school seeks to prevent bullying by creating opportunities for discussion, across the curriculum, of its serious and sometimes potentially tragic consequences.
- 4.4 Students are encouraged to come forward and inform staff when they know that bullying has occurred without fear of retribution. As a matter of principle, students are persuaded that to remain silent when they have knowledge of bullying is to condone it and possibly encourage it in the future. It is important that students are aware and confident that staff are readily accessible to consider cases of bullying.
- 4.5 All staff are expected to deal with bullying whenever and wherever they encounter it. In a large majority of cases, bullying will be reported to the form tutor, Head of Year or the relevant Pastoral Manager at an early stage, whether or not the member of staff reporting it has already dealt with it. When bullying has been identified and it is established that there is a clear bully and victim, the school aims in the short term to support the victim and ensure that the bullying stops. In the longer term, steps are taken to identify with both parties, often through a non-judgemental approach, the point at which the bullying started and the reasons for it. This is particularly important where there might be blame on both sides and may assist in identifying ways in which,

\* *DitchtheLabel.org (The Annual Bullying Survey 2017)*

\*\* *<http://www.abqm-uk.com> (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)*



by agreement, the cause of the bullying may be eliminated in future.

4.6 Once immediate steps have been taken, bullying incidents will always be followed up at a later date. Both victim and bully may need support as to how to cope with similar situations if they recur. Follow up support may involve any member of staff whom the victim or bully feels comfortable talking to. In certain cases, it may be appropriate to involve support from other students; for example:

- Sixth Form students
- A valued members of the victim's peer group
- Anti-bullying Ambassadors

Behaviour strategies may be suggested to both bully and victim to help them cope in future. In some cases, victim and bully may be brought together for discussion if this is thought likely to be productive.

4.7 Victims are dealt with in a variety of ways, depending on the particular circumstances of the case. Frequently, there is a need to consider ways of increasing the victim's self-esteem. Confidentiality is important, and the victim needs to be reassured that as far as possible he/she is protected from retaliation.

4.8 Bullies are supported and/or sanctioned as appropriate and several factors need to be taken into account when considering a sanction. These include the seriousness of the offence, the assessed harm suffered by the victim, the period of time over which the bullying has occurred, whether or not there has been any provocation on the part of the victim, the previous record and conduct of the alleged bully, etc.

4.9 Sanctions are administered on the basis of the particular circumstances of each case and in line with the school behaviour policy.

4.10 Parents are always informed of any case of bullying. Wherever possible, their support is enlisted in any attempt by the school to prevent any repetition. Liaison with parents is paramount. Parents often hear about bullying before teachers and are potentially a powerful source of support both in detecting and dealing with it.

4.11 All incidents of bullying are recorded in SIMs. All staff must record all cases referred to them indicating the type of bullying, the role of the student and details of the bullying.

4.12 All staff should have access to written guidance on suggested strategies for dealing with victims. Please see Appendix 3.

## 5. Evaluation and Development

5.1 The school's policy on bullying, as an integral part of its overall behaviour strategy, is regularly evaluated. Monitoring and evaluation occur through the Anti-bullying Strategy Group and Senior Leadership Team.

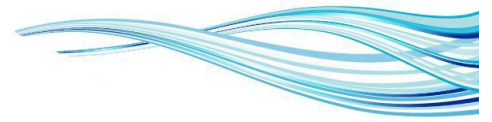
5.2 The school must continue to seek ways of creating a climate in which young people and teachers actively co-operate in rejecting the destructive and debilitating effects of bullying. Bullying cannot be tackled in isolation. It goes to the heart of what the school is about in terms of the ways in which students relate to each other, relationships between staff and relationships between staff and students. Freedom from fear of bullying is not enough to ensure successful learning but is a necessary



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condition for effective learning.





## **Appendix 1: Advice for students**

If you are being bullied or are worried about someone you know is being bullied, **report this immediately to your Tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Manager** (or ask a friend or parent to report it). If you are unable to find one of these people, report to any member of school staff. Below is some good advice from the Anti-bullying Alliance on dealing with bullying.

## **Tips for children and young people**

**Are you a young person who's being bullied? Or maybe you're witnessing others being bullied? Either way there are ways around it. Here's our anti-bullying tips for you.**

- ◇ It doesn't matter what colour hair you have; how you speak; how you walk; how you talk – **it is not your fault if you get bullied**. We are all different in some way and that's what makes us amazing.
- ◇ Whether you are a boy or a girl, old or young, big or small – bullying makes you feel rubbish and it's okay to be upset about it. **The important thing is that you tell someone about it.**
- ◇ If you feel you can, talk to a teacher you trust or your parents, brother or sister. If you don't want to do that **you can always call Childline** 0800 11 11 or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk).
- ◇ Keep a record of what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. If the bullying is online, **keep the evidence** – save or copy any photos, videos, texts, emails or posts.
- ◇ It can be tempting if you are being bullied to retaliate – to send a horrible message back to someone, to try and embarrass and hurt the other person, or to fight back. **This is not a good idea – you might end up getting into trouble or get yourself even more hurt.**
- ◇ **Think about other ways you can respond to bullying.** For example, practice saying: "I don't like it when you say that/do that – please stop." Think about other people who can help you if you are being bullied – this could be other classmates, or a teacher.
- ◇ **Only hang out with people who make you feel good about yourself.** If someone constantly puts you down they are not a real friend and not worth your time.
- ◇ **Be kind to yourself**, and do things that make you feel good, relax and make new friends. You might play an instrument; write lyrics; draw cartoons; dance; act or join a sports club. This is your life so make sure it's the best life possible – don't let anyone bring you down.
- ◇ **Remember to be kind to other people!** Just because someone is different to you – that doesn't mean you are better than them or have a right to make them feel bad. If you mess up, say sorry. You don't have to be friends with everyone – but you should always show respect, make it clear that you don't like it when people bully others, and stick up for people who are having a hard time.



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**If you're worried about bullying speak to someone you trust or call Childline on 0800 11 11**

## **Appendix 2: Advice for parents**

### **Tips for parents and carers**

If your child is being bullied or you think they might be, here are some tips on how to talk to them and prevent further bullying.

- ◇ If your child is being bullied, **don't panic**. Explain to your child that the bullying is not their fault and together you will sort this out.
- ◇ **Bullying is never acceptable**; and should always be taken seriously. It is never your child's fault if they've been bullied.
- ◇ Try and **establish the facts**. It can be helpful to keep a diary of events. If the bullying is online, save or copy images and text.
- ◇ **Find out what your child wants to happen**. Help to identify steps you can take; and the skills they have to help sort out the situation. Make sure you always keep them informed about any actions you decide to take.
- ◇ **You may be tempted to tell your child to retaliate but this can have unpredictable results**. Your child might get into trouble or get even more hurt. Rather – role play non-violent ways they can respond to children that are bullying them (e.g. "I don't like it when you say that to me / do that to me. Stop."); show them how to block or unfriend people if the bullying is online and help them identify other friends or adults that can support them.
- ◇ **Encourage your child to get involved in activities that build their confidence and esteem**, and help them to form friendships outside of school (or wherever the bullying is taking place).



#### **Get some advice.**

There are many organisations that can give you some advice. Contact them if you are worried about bullying and want to talk to someone.  
<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice-parents-carers/>



**You can access our free anti-bullying online information tool at [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/parenttool](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/parenttool)**

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



Parents often feel angry if they find out that their child is being bullied but over-reacting and storming into school will not help the situation. Discuss the situation with your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Manager. The School has a variety of sanctions they can use, depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

- <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-parents>
- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/522f7cdb4b056ca5e8127f6/t/57516b91d210b84ca7cf5bf2/1464953749150/Final-Parents+Guide+KC.pdf>

\* *DitchtheLabel.org (The Annual Bullying Survey 2017)*

\*\* *http://www.abqm-uk.com (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)*



### **Appendix 3: Advice for staff**

Throughout the school day all members of staff should be alert to bullying behaviour and be pro-active in stopping it. Bullying behaviour should be reported immediately to a member of the Pastoral team or Head of Year.

#### **Teaching Staff:**

- In line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy, use a range of behaviour management strategies in all your lessons to establish an expectation for good behaviour.
- Use prompt positive correction for low level disruption that targets individuals; which includes - verbal put downs, taking of possessions, pushing and shoving; eg. we treat each other with respect in this classroom.
- Always 'separate the behaviour from the child' by making it clear that the school does not accept bullying behaviour [see section 1] and there is no place for this behaviour in this school; e.g. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated in this school.
- A calm request to stop the behaviour and a warning that, should they continue, they would be engaging in bullying behaviour, should be sufficient.
- In lessons, forward planning should aim to achieve social inclusion of all students by carefully planning seating and management of groups.
- If the behaviour is repeated and/or high-level bullying, then the incident should be reported promptly to the Head of Year or Pastoral Manager and logged on SIMs.

#### **Pastoral Team and Heads of Year:**

If bullying is reported, the following procedures should be followed:

- Reassure the student making the report that they have made the right decision to tell and take their comments seriously. Investigate the report of bullying (using the procedure for investigating incidents) and adopt an unprejudiced approach and be prepared to listen carefully to all students involved (including the alleged aggressor).
- Discuss with the victim the possible actions that could be taken and give them the choice of how they would like the incident to be dealt with; ask them what he or she would like to happen next.
- Ensure that parents of those directly involved are notified by telephone that an investigation is being carried out – arrange to keep them informed of the outcomes and once the investigation has been completed, inform them of any actions or sanctions.
- Ensure the bullying is logged on SIMs for both the aggressor and victim (and others involved) and apply appropriate sanctions consistent with the school behaviour policy. **If appropriate**, arrange for a restorative meeting to take place between the victim and aggressor.
- Check with the victim at regular intervals (at least weekly) that the bullying has stopped and that they feel supported.
- If the aggressor continues to bully (either the original victim or others), they will face more extreme sanctions consistent with the school behaviour policy. This could include internal isolation or exclusion from school.

# Tips for teachers and school staff

It is important to know how to tackle bullying in the classroom and playground. Whether a pupil is being bullied or you just want to prevent it from happening, here's our anti-bullying tips for you.

- ◇ **Bullying is not just something that children and teenagers go through.** It is well researched that bullying causes long term damage to both the person on the receiving end, and those who bully.
- ◇ **It is not a child's fault if they are bullied.** Children should never be told to just ignore it, or to change who they are. It is the children doing the bullying that need to change their behaviour and their attitude. This is particularly true if the bullying is targeted at a pupil's gender, sexuality, race, faith, impairment or special educational need.
- ◇ **It is not true that girls are 'bitchy' and boys just have a punch up and get over it.** Avoid gender stereotypes when it comes to tackling bullying. Anyone can be capable of bullying behaviour and it has a serious impact on both boys and girls.
- ◇ **Children need to be supported to speak out** if they or someone they know is being bullied. Make it clear how pupils can report bullying. If a child tells you they are being bullied – take what they say seriously and ask them what they want to happen. Tell them that together you will make it stop and record all your actions. Make sure they know they can call a helpline like Childline any time.
- ◇ The only way to stop bullying is to acknowledge that it happens and **create a talking culture in your school** where any hurtful behaviour is quickly brought out in the open, discussed and dealt with. It is rarely one on one behaviour and so take time to find out who else is involved – and how other pupils can support the person on the receiving end while making it clear to the person or people doing the bullying that it's not acceptable.
- ◇ **Make sure your Anti-Bullying Policy is up to date**, freely accessible and regularly promoted - and that it makes clear how you will respond to bullying as a school community.
- ◇ **Challenge all forms of offensive or discriminatory language** in your school (e.g. homophobic and transphobic comments, sexist and sexual language, racist and faith targeted comments, disablist words).
- ◇ **Take time to talk to pupils** about what it feels like to be in your school, whether there are any bullying hot spots – and if there is anything you could do differently to stop bullying.



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**You can complete free online CPD training about bullying for professionals at [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/onlinetraining](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/onlinetraining)**

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



## **Appendix 4: Useful information**

### **SLT School Anti-Bullying Lead:**

Deputy Headteacher, Support and Intervention

### **SWR Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

Miss E Gurney  
Mrs N Renyard  
Mrs S Hilton  
Mrs E Wolfenden  
Mrs H Dell

### **Useful Phone Numbers:**

Childline 0800 1111  
NSPCC 0808 800 5000  
Samaritans 08457 909090

### **Useful Web-sites:**

antibullying.net  
kidscape.org.uk  
childline.org.uk  
anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk  
nspcc.org.uk  
kooth.com  
childnet.com  
cyberbullying.org  
actagainstbullying.org  
ditchthelabel.org  
ceop.police.uk/CEOP-Reporting

### **Links to SWR Policies**

Safeguarding  
Special Educational Needs  
PSHE  
Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions  
Looked After Children  
Home School Agreement Document  
Search, Screening and Confiscation  
Equality  
Behaviour for Learning  
E-Safety

\* *DitchtheLabel.org (The Annual Bullying Survey 2017)*

\*\* *<http://www.abqm-uk.com> (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)*

## **APPENDIX 5: Cyber Bullying**

The following advice and guidance have been taken from BullyingUK

### **What is cyber bullying?**

Cyber bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. Social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites and chat rooms such as Facebook, Xbox Live, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and other chat rooms can be great fun and a positive experience. But what do you do when things go wrong?

Cyber bullying is rife on the internet and most young people will experience it or see it at some time. In our recent national bullying survey, 56% of young people said they have seen others be bullied online and 42% have felt unsafe online. Cyber bullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and it can go viral very fast.

### **Types of cyber bullying**

There are many ways of bullying someone online and for some it can take shape in more ways than one. Some of the types of cyber bullying are:

- Harassment - This is the act of sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages and being abusive. Nasty or humiliating comments on posts, photos and in chat rooms. Being explicitly offensive on gaming sites.
- Denigration – This is when someone may send information about another person that is fake, damaging and untrue. Sharing photos of someone for the purpose to ridicule, spreading fake rumours and gossip. This can be on any site online or on apps. We even hear about people altering photos of others and posting in online for the purpose of bullying.
- Flaming – This is when someone is purposely using really extreme and offensive language and getting into online arguments and fights. They do this to cause reactions and enjoy the fact it causes someone to get distressed.
- Impersonation – This is when someone will hack into someone's email or social networking account and use the person's online identity to send or post vicious or embarrassing material to/about others. The making up of fake profiles on social network sites, apps and online are commonplace and it can be really difficult to get them closed down.
- Outing and Trickery – This is when someone may share personal information about another or trick someone into revealing secrets and forward it to others. They may also do this with private images and videos too.
- Cyber Stalking – This is the act of repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm, harassment, intimidating messages, or engaging in other online activities that make a person afraid for his or her safety. The actions may be illegal too depending on what they are doing.
- Exclusion – This is when others intentionally leave someone out of a group such as group messages, online apps, gaming sites and other online engagement. This is also a form of social bullying and a very common.

### **Bullying by spreading rumours and gossip**

The worst thing about social networking sites and messaging apps is that anything nasty posted about you can be seen by lots of people and these posts can go viral very fast and be shared by so many people within minutes in some cases.

From what we have heard from people who have been bullied online, the most vicious gossip and rumours are often spread by people who were once your best friends so it's best to keep secrets and personal information to yourself. Only tell people things if it wouldn't embarrass you if other people found out about them. Posting false and malicious things about people on the internet can be classed as harassment.

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\*\* *<http://www.abqm-uk.com> (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)*

## **Threatening behaviour**

Anyone who makes threats to you on the internet could be committing a criminal offence. It's against the law in the UK to use the phone system, which includes the internet, to cause alarm or distress. It could also be against the 1997 Harassment Act. If threats are made against you then it's essential you confide in your parents, or someone you trust so that they can make a complaint to the police. If you can't print out the threats use the "print screen" button or snipping tool to take a snapshot of the computer screen and then save that somewhere safe. Or if you have a phone or tablet, use the screenshot function and keep these images safe.

## **Blackmail and grooming**

We have had many complaints from young people that new "friends" online have tried to pressure them into taking their clothes off and filming or taking images of themselves. Threats have been made that their parent will be told embarrassing things if they don't take part or they will send the images to everyone they know if they do not do it.

This is an offence called "grooming" in the UK and people who have been found guilty of "grooming" have been jailed. Remember: everyone you meet on the internet is a stranger and you need to keep personal things personal to you, don't share your secrets with other people and if anyone asks you to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable then don't do it.

We often hear of people in relationships trying to make their boyfriend or girlfriend send sexting images of themselves to prove they love them or want to be with them. It is against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to take, send or redistribute pictures of anyone under the age of 18. CEOP is The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre and they investigate cases of sexual abuse and grooming on the internet. You can report incidents by clicking the red button on the top right hand corner of the CEOP website. Although the police can get information from your computer's hard drive, it is helpful if you don't delete anything until the police have decided whether they need it as evidence.

## **When comments get abusive**

There are quite a few instant messaging apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Secret, Whisper and Instagram. They are a great way of sharing things with your friends and having fun. But if things turn nasty you can block people from seeing you are online and you can save abusive conversations or print them out as evidence.

It's tempting to have a go back if someone makes a rude posting on your online space, social network or app but don't. This is called flaming and it just makes the problem worse. Abusive comments are very upsetting but the best way to deal with them is to get them removed by the website.

## **Inappropriate images**

It's easy to save any pictures of anyone on any site and upload them to the internet. Make sure that you have the person's permission to take a picture and that they're happy for thousands of people to see it on the internet. Be wary of tagging and hashtags as this will send the picture out to a wider audience than you may have originally intended.

Don't upset people and then upload their pictures for other people to have a laugh. That could be harassment. Don't digitally alter pictures of people either because what you think is funny may be offensive to other people. Don't let anyone take pictures of you that might embarrass you.

## **Innocent bystander**

There is no such thing as an innocent bystander and if you have seen someone being bullied online, you can report it to the online site or app. Ignoring it may feel like the easiest thing to do but the person who is being subjected to that bullying may need your help and support to get it stopped. Most sites now have a report button which is something you can do and this will send the bullying comments to the site to investigate.

\* *DitchtheLabel.org (The Annual Bullying Survey 2017)*

\*\* *<http://www.abqm-uk.com> (Anti-bullying Quality Mark)*

## **Tips and advice**

- If you post abuse about anyone else online or if you send threats, you can be traced by the police without any difficulty. Every time you visit a website or make a posting, your internet service provider, Sky, BT or Virgin, has an electronic note of your activity. Even if you create an anonymous email address like Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo, you can still be traced.
- Keep safe by using unusual passwords. Use a combination of letters, lowercase, uppercase, symbols and numbers. Don't use any part of your name or email address and don't use your birth date either because that's easy for people who know you to guess. Don't let anyone see you signing in and if they do, change the password as soon as you can.
- If you are using a public computer such as one in a library, computer shop, or even a shared family computer, be sure to sign out of any web service you are using before leaving the computer so that you can protect your privacy.
- Being bullied online can affect someone enormously. Being bullied can impact on a person's self-esteem, confidence and social skills. We have supported people affected by this type of bullying, and in many cases, they have had to leave school, work and social networks to escape bullying. Try to consider the impact your words may have and think twice before posting.
- Think twice before you post anything online because once it's out there you can't take it back. It is easy for any comments or posts you make online to be taken out of context and these could be damaging to you in the long term. Read more about digital footprints and how this can affect your life both online and offline

## **Useful links:**

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-is-cyberbullying>

<https://cyberbullying.org>

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/37996>