



# Cyberbullying

## Advice for Parents in Willow Park Junior School

---

*The following advice is aimed at all parents. Just because your son may be very young, please don't assume this notice does not apply to your family. Digital communication is all-pervasive in today's world and although your home may have internet security, your child may use other devices in other places.....*

- It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Parents can help by making sure their son understands how seriously Willow takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents should also explain to their sons - in simple terms- the legal issues relating to cyber-bullying. (Online etiquette and personal responsibility).
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be, by saving an offensive text on their or their son's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.
- If the cyber-bullying emanates from school, then Parents should contact their son's class-teacher as soon as possible. Good communication (and adult support) is the key to coping with cyber-bullying.

### What can I do to help?

Parents can help stop cyber-bullying. You can start by talking to your children about the issue and teaching them certain basic rules that will help prevent cyber-bullying from happening to them or someone they know. Children should be told that cyber-bullying is not acceptable.

The school advises against the use of Facebook, blogs, personal websites etc. These are not appropriate or safe for young children.

### What children need to know: (Parents should talk through the following points with their son):

- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, personal websites or blogs.
- Never tell anyone (except your parents) your password, even friends. If you have told someone your password in the past, you should change it now and tell your parents the new password.
- If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult that you trust- teacher or parent.
- Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know is a bully.
- Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email. Once information is available online, it is easily shared and difficult to control.
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if you received the message. Sometimes it is best to take a night's sleep before sending an e-mail on a contentious issue.
- Don't try to be 'too smart' or witty in your written comments – they can be hurtful.
- Help classmates who are bullied online by not joining in - and showing bullying messages to an adult. We all have a part to play in stopping cyber-bullying.
- Always be as polite online as you are in person.

## What Parents Can Do

- Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house. Many parents like to store the family computer under the stairs. It is a good idea to require that all mobile devices- ipads, smartphones etc. are kept "downstairs". Turning off the wireless router at a specified (early) point in the evening is a good idea.
- Should you ignore school advice and allow your son set up email, social networking / chat accounts, make sure you are present with your children when doing so. Make sure that you know their screen names and passwords and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.
- Regularly go over their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know him or her. Do so in an informal manner. If you have been through the entire list on a previous occasion, review only the new contacts.
- Discuss cyber-bullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyber-bullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason children don't tell adults when they are cyber-bullied. Then explore the incident with your son and advise him accordingly.

## What should I do if my child is being cyber bullied?

- *If you suspect your child is being cyber bullied, don't ignore it. Consider the following approaches:*
  - Be consciously aware of your child's internet activity.
  - Make sure your child is aware of cyber bullying.
  - Try to understand the technology and communication networks your child uses.
  - Ask your son to show you any nasty messages he receives.
  - Tell your son never to respond to an abusive text message – remember, *what the cyber bully most wants is.... a reply!*
  - Talk to your son's teacher if other pupils at Willow are involved.

## Could my son be a cyber-bully?

No one wants to think of their son bullying other children. But cyber bullying is somewhat different from other forms of bullying - tactics can often be hidden and more subtle - so it's sometimes difficult to detect. So the answer is – YES!

Cyber bullies don't need to be bigger or more aggressive or even in the same place as the child they're bullying. But like all bullies, they often rely on the support of bystanders - other children who observe what they're doing and don't challenge them.

- Ask your child if they've ever done anything online to hurt or upset anyone. It's important to emphasise to your child that being cruel to other children and taking part in an activity that could hurt them is wrong.
- Cyber bullying also gives children the opportunity to bully adults. Teachers (or Coaches) can sometimes be the victims of ill-mannered internet messaging.
- Make sure your son is aware that these activities are unacceptable and that Willow will deal in a strict manner with the pupils involved.

Cyber-Bullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world. If you see it happening, report it. Don't ignore it.

## Guidance for Pupils



### Summary of Advice to Pupils

- If you believe you (or someone else) is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult (your Mum/Dad or teacher) as soon as possible.
- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them, don't delete the content.
- Don't respond to abusive or aggressive communications.
- Don't share information on passwords (except with your Parents).
- Don't share your contact details with people you do not know.
- Always be aware that, online, people may not be who they say they are.