



PC 5504 DIX
School Liaison Officer,
Safer Schools Partnership,
Abingdon Police Station,
Colwell Drive Abingdon,
OX14 1AU
Tel. 101
Date 11th November 2013

Dear Parents & Guardians

Anti-Bullying Week 2013

Anti-Bullying Week this year will take place during the week **18th – 22nd of November**.

This years Anti-Bullying Week encourages children and young people to take the lead on creating a future without bullying - using new technologies to promote positive communication rather than being held back by cyberbullying.

The aims for the week are:

- To ensure all children and young people are equipped to recognise and challenge bullying behaviour wherever it happens - whether face to face or in cyberspace.
- To equip schools, colleges and youth service leaders with resources to encourage youth led anti-bullying initiatives and the positive use of new technologies.
- To educate those who support and work with children to recognise those who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying through new technologies - encouraging an inclusive approach to all e-safety education.

Further details of the national campaign run by the Anti-Bullying Alliance can be found on their website <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/>

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be an issue for young people & can affect their school & homelife. It can possibly be committed with out the offender/s fully realising the consequences of their actions. So please be aware of the following, & discuss with your children to support the aims of **Anti-bullying Week**.

In brief, Cyberbullying is where a person uses the internet or mobile phone to upset another person. By its very nature, Cyberbullying can happen anywhere, in school, outside or at home, and on a 24/7 basis. Comments and images can also go out to a wide audience and so increase the anxiety of the victim, who can become to feel upset and threatened, even in their own home.

While Facebook and other social networking sites can be fantastic socialising tools they can also be poorly used and become a vehicle for nasty, hurtful comments & images.

Is your child contributing? Or even committing an offence?

Do you have access to your child's Facebook profile/account? If not, **why not?!**

Is there communication or images on there they don't want you to see?! Some people seem to think it is OK to post comments on Facebook, chat rooms, or mobiles that are perhaps inappropriate, upsetting or offensive. People may say things on Facebook or similar sites that they would not say to another's face, that's adults as well as children. Yet this can be as, or more hurtful, & can be just as much of a criminal offence.

Although bullying is not a specific Criminal Offence in UK law, criminal and civil laws can apply in terms of **'harassment or threatening behaviour'** & **'threatening or menacing communications'**. This is covered under the following legislation.

**Protection from harassment Act 1997, which has both Criminal & Civil Provision,
Malicious Communications Act 1988,
Section 43 of the telecommunications Act 1984,
Communications Act 2003,
Public Order Act 2003.**

You can view a very short film about internet bullying by following the below link. You may feel it appropriate to show this film to your child and discuss it with them

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=LU8K6osTSBE

If you or your child sends any messages that can be offensive or upsetting to the receiver, or others that view it, you or your child could be committing one or more of the above offences. Please discuss this with your child, monitor their Facebook profile & internet use. They may not fully understand this unless you tell them. If you find they have comments or images that fall into this category, please remove them & ensure they understand it can be offensive & upsetting, can be against the law & could get them in trouble.

By monitoring your child's internet use you will also be able to see if they are receiving any negative messages themselves, which they may not be telling you about, & so enable you to help & support them. If you find any content like this, don't reply, it may make things worse. Block the sender from your list & save the messages. If its school related, talk to the school. If you feel this is serious you can also report it to the police. If you or they are being bothered via Text, you can contact your service provider on the below numbers, who will have an area who deal with this.

O2 - ncb@o2.com or 08705214000

Vodafone – 191 from Vodafone phone or 08700700191 (pay monthly) & 08700776655 (pay as you go).

3 – Call 333 from a 3 phone or 0870733033

Orange – Call 450 on an Orange Phone or 07973100450

T-Mobile: call 150 on a T-Mobile Phone or 08454125000

Most children & adults I have spoken too have many hundreds of friends on Facebook, but are they really friends? By sending your personal images & conversations to people you hardly know, or are not true friends with, can bring many unwanted complications. I strongly feel if someone is not a trusted friend, then you could be causing yourself future issues by sending your personal images or comments to them! Discuss this with your child & consider reducing their number of friends to a sensible, manageable number of **trusted** people.

The best general advice I can give to parents at this time is to visit the CEOPS (Child Exploitation & Online Protection Service) website which is www.thinkuknow.co.uk . CEOPS is a Police Organisation & specialises in online safety for children. The site is extremely user friendly & designed for children of all ages to use & learn about internet safety in a fun & modern way & includes several short films. There is also a parent & carer section which gives great advice & guidance. This really is a fantastic tool & one that I really hope you will visit & encourage your children to do the same. Maybe you could consider visiting the site together with your child.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, I hope you find it practical & useful & may help you reduce the risk of a negative internet related experience.

Please check the Thames Valley Police Website www.thamesvalley.police.uk, For more information on Thames Valley Police, your local Neighbourhood Police Team and Crime in your local area.

Regards
Mike