Online bullying

START NOW – the two questions answered worst on the half-term quiz. Answer on your whiteboard:

Question 1

What is the difference between a **passive bystander** and an **active bystander**?

Give one safe thing an active bystander could do.

Question 2

Which British value means everyone gets a say: **democracy** or **mutual respect and tolerance**?

Give one example of it in school.

RSHE (PSHE)

Unit Our online lives: How can I stay safe?

Outcome

I can explain what online bullying is.

This lesson links to Fellowship, Aspiration, Integrity, and Humility. Fellowship comes through as you explore how everyone has a responsibility to report and block bullying and to support those who are targeted. Aspiration is shown in the steps you can take to make online spaces safer and kinder for all. Integrity shines when you learn that bullying is never acceptable regardless of feelings or peer pressure — always choosing what is right. Humility grows as you recognise that some bullies act from their own pain, calling you to understand rather than simply judge.

Keywords

discrimination	when people are treated unfairly or differently because of things like their race, gender or beliefs
harassment	when someone repeatedly bothers, bullies, or disturbs another person, making them feel unsafe, uncomfortable or upset
humiliation	making someone feel embarrassed, ashamed or unimportant

Keywords

exclusion	being purposefully left out of a group
impersonation	pretending to be another person

Lesson outline

Online bullying

- What is online bullying?
- Why do some people choose to bully others online?

What is online bullying?

Explanation

Bullying can take many forms.

Sometimes, someone can experience just in-person bullying, whereas others just experience online bullying, but these often overlap with people experiencing both types.

Online bullying is often referred to as cyberbullying.

This is where someone uses online platforms, such as social media or messaging apps, to harm or intimidate another person.

Cyberbullying can happen anywhere online.

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What is online bullying?

Explanation

Just because cyberbullying occurs online, it does not mean that a victim does not feel harm.

Online bullying is just as harmful as in-person bullying, and the effects caused by online bullying are similar.

Just like in-person bullying, online bullying is often linked to **discrimination**.



This means that the person is focusing their bullying on the way the victim looks or who they are.

Sofia

What is online bullying?

Check

Change one word in the sentence to make the statement correct.

Online bullying is not as harmful as in-person bullying.

Online bullying is just as harmful as in-person bullying.

What is online bullying?

Explanation

Online bullying is often aimed at a person's:



Andeep

lifestyle choices

financial situation



Sam



Sofia

protected characteristics

What is online bullying?

Explanation

Bullying linked to **discrimination** could be about any of the nine protected characteristics, which are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

What is online bullying?

Check

Fill in the gap to complete the sentence.

Online bullying is often linked to discrimination, this means the bullying relates to what a person looks like or who they are as a person.

What is online bullying?

Explanation

Online bullying can include:

- threats
- **harassment**
- **humiliation**
- cyberstalking
- **exclusion**
- **impersonation**.

Threats

Cyberbullying can be in the form of sending threatening messages or making threatening comments.



Izzy

Even though these comments are made in online spaces, it can still make the person receiving them feel scared or concerned for their safety in the real world.

Harassment

This is a repetitive form of behaviour that intends to intimidate or make someone feel scared or upset.

This could include repeatedly sending lots of messages or images to someone online.



Izzy

These messages and images don’t have to be aggressive or threatening to count as **harassment**, or make the person receiving them feel scared or worried.

Humiliation

This is where the online bully tries to make someone feel embarrassed, shamed or unimportant.



Andeep

This is often done by sharing embarrassing pictures or videos of someone without their consent.

Cyberstalking

This involves constant unwanted contact from someone online. It could include someone continuously following another person's online activity to find out what they are doing, who they are with, etc.



Lucas

Cyberstalking can also look like someone hacking another person's online accounts and gathering their personal, private information.

Exclusion

Not including someone in something becomes **exclusion** when the intention behind it is to make someone else feel bad.

People may use online services to purposefully **exclude** others and make them feel left out and isolated.



Jun

This often takes place in group chats or online games.

Impersonation

This is where someone pretends to be someone else online.

This is either done by hacking someone else's online accounts and pretending to be them, while also posting harmful or embarrassing things online, or by setting up a fake profile with the same aim.



Jun

This often takes place on social media.

What is online bullying?

Check

What is missing from the list of types of online bullying?

- **humiliation**
- **exclusion**
- threats
- **harassment**
- cyberstalking
- **impersonation**

What is online bullying?

Explanation

If someone experiences online bullying, they should:

- tell a trusted adult – such as a parent, teacher, or school staff member who can help
- keep a record – write down or take screenshots of messages, posts or comments, including dates and times
- block and report – use the platform's reporting tools to report the account and block the person responsible
- get further help if needed – if the bullying is serious or makes you feel unsafe, your trusted adult can help you decide if it should be reported to the police.

Fellowship: this slide shows that everyone has a responsibility to report bullying and support victims, helping to make online spaces safer and kinder for all.

What is online bullying?

Explanation

If someone experiences online bullying, they should not:

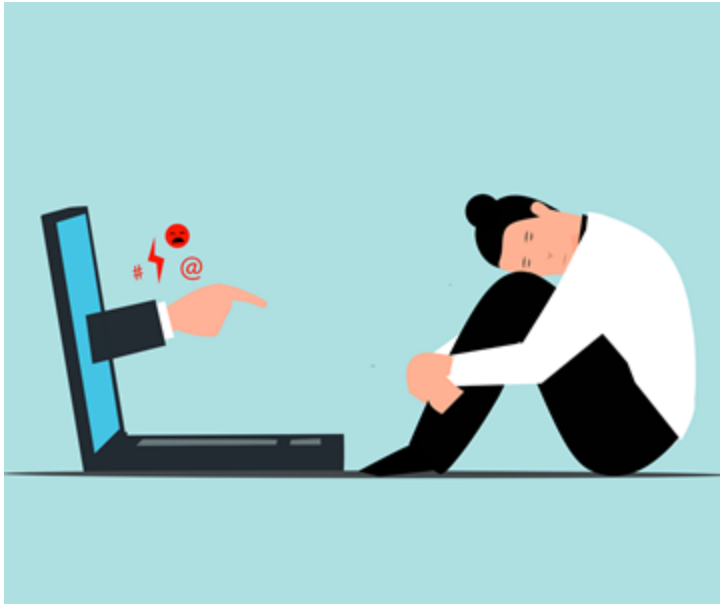
- respond to the bully
- retaliate.

Online bullies often want to get a response from the person they are targeting. By messaging back or even retaliating, it continues the cycle of harm and encourages the bully to do more.

Aspiration: this slide shows the steps to take against bullying — telling a trusted adult, keeping records and reporting — showing the courage to make things better.

What is online bullying?

Explanation



Online bullying becomes a crime if it makes the person being bullied feel scared or worried for their safety.

Even if online bullying does not count as ‘criminal behaviour’ under the law, the impact of online bullying is serious.

What is online bullying?

Explanation



Police Officer Paula

Although there is no exact legal definition of online bullying, it can be prosecuted under a number of UK laws including the:

- Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)
- Protection from **Harassment** Act (1997)
- Communications Act (2003)
- Defamation Act (2013).

What is online bullying?

Explanation

Police Officer Paula



Being found guilty of an offence relating to online bullying under any of these laws could result in:

- a fine
- prison sentence.

It is a serious offence to make another person concerned for their safety through online bullying.

If you are a recipient of online bullying or witness it, you can report it to the police by calling 101.

True or false?

There is no law about online bullying, so it isn't a crime.

T True

F False ✓

Why?

Although there is no exact legal definition of online bullying, it can still be prosecuted under a number of laws (such as the Defamation Act of 2013) if it makes the victim feel scared or concerned for their safety.

Task A What is online bullying?

Practice

With your learning partner, discuss the question:
'what is online bullying?'

In your conversations, consider:

- a definition
- forms online bullying can take
- the law around online bullying
- what to do if you experience or witness online bullying.

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Task A What is online bullying?

Feedback

With your learning partner, discuss the question: 'what is online bullying?' You may have discussed:

- Online bullying is the use of online spaces to harm or intimidate someone.
- Online bullying can take the form of threats, **harassment**, **humiliation**, cyberstalking, **exclusion** or **impersonation**.
- There is no exact legal definition of online bullying, but if cyberbullying makes someone feel scared or intimidated, the behaviour can be considered unlawful under several different laws, such as the Protection from **Harassment** Act (1997) and Communications Act (2003). If someone is found guilty of an offence relating to online bullying they could face a fine or imprisonment.
- If you see or witness online bullying, you should block and report the bully and speak to a trusted adult. You should never respond or retaliate.

Lesson outline

Online bullying

- What is online bullying?
- Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

People may choose to bully others online for different reasons, such as:

- anonymity
- power and control
- insecurity
- past trauma
- peer pressure.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

Anonymity

This is not true, as bullies can face serious consequences for threatening or harmful behaviour online.



Alex

People may engage in bullying behaviours online, even if they wouldn't in real life.

This is because they feel they are anonymous online, and their actions can't be traced back to them, or their actions don't have consequences in the real world.

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Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Check

People may bully online even if they wouldn't in real life, because they think they are _____ online.

a aggressive

b anonymous ✓

c an anomaly

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

Power and control

Some people may bully others online in an attempt to feel power or control.

They may choose to **exclude** people to control who others speak to or interact with.

They may also **humiliate** others to make the person feel unimportant and less than them.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

Insecurity

People may choose to bully others online due to their own personal insecurities.



Jacob

People may **humiliate** or **discriminate** against someone based on things that they themselves are self-conscious about.

Integrity: this slide shows that bullying for power or control is never acceptable — choosing to treat others with dignity regardless of how it makes you feel.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

Past trauma

People may feel angry, upset or hurt due to past traumas, and want to make others feel the same so they choose to bully others online.



Andeep

This may make the bully, wrongly, feel like they are taking back some control of their emotions. They may also feel that, by making others feel bad, they can make them feel better about themselves.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

If someone ever feels angry, upset or hurt, trying to make others feel the same will never make them feel better.

It is typical to feel negative emotions at some points in our lives and, if someone is concerned about the way that they feel, it is important to speak to a trusted adult or a medical professional.

Humility: this slide shows that some people bully due to past trauma, calling us to respond with understanding rather than simply labelling them as bad.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Check

Rewrite the following sentence so it is correct.

It is typical to feel negative emotions at some points in our lives and, therefore, we should always try to make others feel the same so we feel better.

It is typical to feel negative emotions at some points in our lives, but we should never try to make others feel the same as this won't make us feel better.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation

Peer pressure

People may bully others online if they are part of a group who are also engaging in bullying.

Being a part of a group chat or online space that has purposefully **excluded** another person is still engaging in bullying.

People may also feel that they have to join in on **harassing** or **discriminating** against others online if their friends or others are doing it too.

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Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Explanation



It is never ok to bully another person online or in person.

No matter how a person feels, what their friends are doing, or what they are going through, making others feel scared, **humiliated** or threatened is never acceptable.

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Check

True or false?

People may engage in online bullying if they feel insecure or upset themselves.

T **True** ✓

F **False**

1) Label the image with four reasons why someone might choose to bully others online.



1) Why is it never ok to bully someone? Explain your answer in two-three sentences.

Task B

Why do some people choose to bully others online?

Feedback

1) Label the image with four reasons why someone might choose to bully others online. You may have said:

They feel peer pressure to do so.

They want to feel power or control.



They think they are anonymous online.

They feel upset, angry or sad and want to make others feel the same way.

They feel insecure or jealous themselves.

2) Why is it never ok to bully someone?

   Explain your answer in two-three sentences.

There are no circumstances when it is ok to bully someone. Even if a bully feels angry or upset, or even if their friends are doing it, it is never acceptable. Online bullying is just as harmful as in-person bullying and can have significant negative impacts on the victim.

Summary Online bullying

Online bullying is the use of technology to **discriminate** against someone or cause them harm.

Online bullying could be aimed at a person's lifestyle choices, financial situation, or due their protected characteristics.

Online bullying can take on lots of different forms, such as threats, **harassment**, **humiliation**, cyberstalking, **exclusion** or **impersonation**.

Although online bullying often takes place on social media, messaging apps or online gaming spaces, online bullying can happen anywhere and can be just as harmful as in-person bullying.

If you experience or witness online bullying, you should tell a trusted adult and report and block the account. Do not engage with the person.

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Where to get support

Childline

A website and phone line which is able to offer confidential advice and support.

CEOP

CEOP helps protect children from online abuse and exploitation.

Internet Matters

Teaches children and parents how to stay safe and happy online while using the internet.