

Remember...

- Everyone makes mistakes. Mums, dads, teachers; everyone. What matters is what we do about them.
- **No matter what has happened there is always someone who will help you. All you have to do is ask.**
- People who care about you will always help. Your school has many adults you can go to for help.
- **To many parents, the online world is new. They need help to understand it too sometimes.**
- When anyone asks you to send images of yourself, you should always ask why. Sometimes there is a perfectly reasonable explanation, but sometimes, you should say no. If you are in any doubt at all, you should always say no.
- **Never take, or allow to be taken, an image of yourself that you would not show to your mum, dad grandma or grandad.**
- Don't fall into the "everyone's doing it" trap. If "everyone" jumped off a cliff would that make it alright? Don't follow the crowd, be your own person.
- **Don't panic. Someone can help you!**
- **Together, we can make E-Sussex, E-Safe.**

Breaking the cycle

Bullies like to have an impact – and they want to see that impact. They want to make you angry, sad, depressed, miserable, frightened and embarrassed.

If you respond to a bully by writing a nasty message back to them or threatening them, all you are doing is showing them how angry or upset they have made you – in other words it gives them power.

Doing nothing is a very powerful weapon for you.

The bully will be watching their "in-box" waiting for a reply that never comes. They may well send you more messages. If so, don't reply, but do keep them. Anyone helping to sort this out will need to see them. By not replying, and the bully sending more horrid messages, all they are doing is providing more evidence against themselves.

Never suffer in silence – always tell a trusted adult.

I'm being bullied online – help!

(A guide for children and young people)

Someone (or a group of people) is sending me horrid messages – what should I do?

First, bullies want you to reply – they want to see how upset or angry they can make you. The first thing to do is deny them any reaction, so never reply. If you are likely to meet these people at school, then you need to look really unconcerned. If they challenge you, just say that the situation is being dealt with.

I hate having this stuff on my computer. Should I delete it?

No. Please do not delete any incoming messages. Your school will want to see the messages because it helps them when tackling the bully and enlisting the help of the bully's family.

What if I am being bullied online, but not by messages that are sent to me. What if someone is saying hurtful things about me on their own social networking site?

Again, the “Don’t React” rule applies – but you can take a copy of their social networking site pages. The bully will want you to see what they have written – that is how they get their power – however you can take a cope. Look at your PC keyboard and you will find a button with PRT SCRN on it. Usually, you have to press and hold the CTRL button and then tap the PRT SCRN button. Nothing seems to happen. **Don’t**

panic! Now open a blank Word document and press CTRL and V (or right click in the document and select paste) and you will have a copy of their screen. Try it a few times just to get used to the idea.

I’m not sure about telling someone at school – it might make it worse.

The fact is that bullying is totally unacceptable. No-one has the right to make you feel miserable or frightened. Bullies rely on the fact that what they do makes you feel weak and helpless – **YOU AREN’T!** The good news is that bullies are also cowards. They do not like getting into trouble themselves. If you tell an adult you trust in school, not only can they help the bullying to stop for you, but you may also be saving someone else from going through the same thing. Bullies rarely pick on just one person, and they almost never stop after they have bullied someone.

But am I really that powerful?

Absolutely! Just imagine what would happen if, in every school in the County, every single child or young adult just said “No More!”, and decided to adopt a zero tolerance to bullying. Pretty soon, the bullies would have no-one to pick on.

I have tried to deal with the bully myself. I have sent some messages back that I don’t want my parents, carers or teachers to see. I have used some bad language.

It is quite understandable that you wanted to try to stop it yourself. The people dealing with the bullying will not care what you have said at this stage. The important thing is to stop the bullying – after all, they started it. Now, once the bullying is under control, mum or dad may have a word about your language – but they will understand that you were frightened and under stress. Take it on board as a lesson learned.

What if I am being bullied about some photographs I have sent someone that I now wish I hadn’t.

OK, well, the reality is that once a photograph leaves your possession, you have lost control of it. So let’s start with a lesson for the future – never send anyone a photograph that you would not show your strictest, most elderly relative and make sure any photographs you DO send are low resolution – ask your school how to do this.

Secondly, if you are under 16 and the photographs of you are nude or semi-nude, even possessing them may be a criminal offence and showing them to others would be a very serious matter. Once this is explained to the people concerned, they usually co-operate in destroying the images.

Thirdly, it will take time to rebuild trust. That’s ok, and perfectly natural. Your parents and carers may want to supervise you online for a while. Rebuilding the trust is part of that process.