



ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Ania Hildrey, FCCT, B.Ed(Hons), M.Ed, NPQH, NPQEL



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Dear Families

Ref: Online safety and cyber bullying

I wanted to take a moment to address a topic that has become increasingly prevalent in today's digital age – online safety and cyber bullying.

Online life is now a part of our reality and, on the whole, it brings huge benefits to education and social interactions. It is, however, not without its faults and it is critical that access to the Internet by children and vulnerable adults is carefully monitored and action taken where needed.

One of the terms that you will be familiar with is cyber bullying. It refers to the use of technology, such as social media platforms, instant messaging, or online forums, to harass, intimidate, or harm others. It is a serious issue that can have significant negative impacts on the well-being and mental health of others.

As a school, we address the topic of online safety and cyber bullying through the curriculum but, as you can imagine, we have neither visibility of, nor responsibility for, our students' activity in their homes.

As such, it is crucial for the families to be aware of their children's online presence, their interactions with others (whether friends or unknown individuals) and to watch out for the amount of time spent online and the nature of interactions.

If there are any reports or signs of cyber bullying families must take appropriate protective action.

If your child reports it to you openly, the job is, arguably a lot easier, but this is not always the case and so, it is crucial to monitor activity and look out for signs of cyber bullying.

Some common signs include sudden changes in behaviour, reluctance to use digital devices, or, increase and hiding of the devices, out of shame or fear, as well as withdrawal from social activities, and a decline in school performance.

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to have an open and supportive conversation with your child to understand what they might be going through.

Here are some steps you can take to help prevent and address cyber bullying:

1. Educate your child: Yes, we do it as a school, but you are your child's most important teacher! Teach your child about the importance of respectful online behaviour and the potential consequences of cyber bullying. Encourage them to think before they post or share anything online.

2. Monitor their online activity: Keep an eye on your child's online presence and establish guidelines for internet usage. Encourage them to share any concerns or incidents they may come across.

3. Foster open communication: Create a safe and non-judgmental space for your child to talk about their online experiences. Let them know they can always come to you for support and guidance.

4. Report and block: Encourage your child to report any instances of cyber bullying to the relevant authorities or platform administrators. Teach them how to block or unfriend individuals who are engaging in harmful behaviour.

5. Involve the school: If cyber bullying involves other students from our school, inform the class teacher. They can help address the issue and provide support to those involved. We will always seek to address things arising sensitively and in a way that allows students a positive recovery from the mistakes made.

6. Encourage empathy: Teach your child the importance of empathy and kindness towards others, both online and offline. Encourage them to stand up against cyber bullying and to support those who may be targeted.

Remember, addressing cyber bullying requires a collective effort from parents, schools, and the wider community. By working together, we can create a safer and more supportive digital environment for our children.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding cyber bullying, please don't hesitate to reach out to the school or other relevant support services.

Let's continue to prioritise the well-being of our students and ensure their online experiences are positive and empowering.

Please may I also draw your attention to regular online safety videos that you will receive via our Parent Mail app; these short videos are for you to watch in your own time and are really useful and informative in helping to navigate this complex topic.

If there is anything that we can do to support you further, please contact our safeguarding team on st@abbotsleaschool.co.uk and we will approach it in a systematic manner across all age groups.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher