

Frequently Asked Questions from educators

? 1. How should I deal with a student if they disclose something to me about their experiences online?

Online safety is a safeguarding issue, as recognised by Ofsted and by the Department for Education. If a child comes to you about something that is worrying or upsetting them online, whether it be a cyberbullying incident or a stranger they are speaking to, you should deal with this information in the same way as you would treat a safeguarding issue. Ensure you are familiar with your school's safeguarding policy so that you know how to take the appropriate action. For more information on **how to deal with disclosures**, visit our Childnet website – www.childnet.com/handling-disclosures.

In **Ofsted's eyes**, Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, learners and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including: "...online safety and associated issues."¹³

In the Department for Education's '**Keeping children safe in education: Information for all school and college staff**' (September 2016) safeguarding requirements are outlined and cyberbullying is described as a form of emotional abuse and online grooming as a form of sexual abuse.¹⁴

13: www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015

14: www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

? 2. Do schools have a legal duty to deal with bullying and cyberbullying?

Advice from the government in their '**Preventing and tackling bullying**' report from October 2014, says that "every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying." Section 89 of the **Education and Inspection Act 2006** states that head teachers must take measures to "encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils." For more information on your duties regarding cyberbullying, read the DfE supported **Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond**.

? 3. What should I do if I suspect sexting?

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance sets out that all schools should have an effective child protection policy. Youth-produced sexual imagery and a school's approach to it should be reflected in the policy.

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

When an incident involving youth-produced sexual imagery comes to a school or college's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Please refer to the UKCCIS guidance '**Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people**'¹⁵ for more information.

15: www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis

? 4. Can I make changes to the worksheets to adapt them for my group?

Crossing the Line is a free, downloadable Creative Commons resource for schools and youth groups to use. Lesson plans can be easily downloaded from our website, although changes can't be made to the worksheets as they are in PDF form.

For more information, look at the following link:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

? 5. My students switch off when I talk about being safe online as they say that I don't understand, or they explain that they know all about the risks online. What should I do?

Between the ages of 11-14, young people are finding out who they are, where they fit in and who their friendship groups are. Sometimes they may turn to the internet for answers and although many young people find comfort from support groups online, others may find it a confusing place. It is important to ensure that young people know who to report to or even who to talk to, should they need to. Although it is vital that young people know about the online risks that exist, this toolkit is more about generating discussion about what they see online, or what they expect a good friend to do online. Online issues are never usually black and white, with a target and a bully, but people may 'cross the line' in different scenarios and this line is different for different people. This toolkit helps young people discover where they feel the line is for them. Moreover, an Ofsted report from 2013 '**Not yet good enough: PSHE education in schools**',¹⁶ stated that in "just under half of schools, pupils received lessons about staying safe but few had develop the skills to effectively apply their understanding, such as assertiveness skills to stand up for themselves and negotiate their way through difficult situations." This shows that although young people might be aware that they need to be safe online, they don't always apply their learning so it is always worth revisiting and giving them opportunities to apply their skills to different situations.

16: www.gov.uk/government/publications/not-yet-good-enough-personal-social-health-and-economic-education

? 6. What am I meant to do if I hear a student using the term 'gay' in a derogatory way?

Stonewall, a LGBT charity, provided some excellent feedback to us when they reviewed our "Gone too far" cyberbullying film. You will see their advice in the lesson plan itself, however they also have their **guidance for schools** which is an excellent resource to read.¹⁷ It is also important to refer to your school's anti-bullying policy and guidelines and for educators to be seen making a stance against homophobic language.

? 7. How should a school deal with bystanders in the case of cyberbullying?

An online bystander, in this situation, is someone who doesn't get involved in cyberbullying, but that sees it happening and doesn't report it or stand up for those who are bullied. Bullying is often a complex issue and there may not always be obvious bullies and targets. It is important for your school's anti-bullying policy to explain how it addresses cyberbullying and the consequences for those involved. Some schools equally sanction the person who initiated and wrote the mean comment online, as well as those who 'liked' the mean comment and shared it on. Make sure your anti-bullying school policy is clear and that it is explained to all students.

? 8. What if a staff member is the victim of cyberbullying?

The same advice applies for staff members if they are a victim of cyberbullying, whether it be at the hands of other teachers, parents or students themselves. Educators should not retaliate or write anything back. They should save the evidence and talk to a member of the senior leadership team. They could also contact the **Professional Online Safety Helpline** for more support on 08443814772 or by email on helpline@saferrinternet.org.uk

17: www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/an_introduction_to_supporting_lgbt_young_people_-_a_guide_for_schools_2015.pdf

