Parent & Carer Companion Guide

ONLINE BULLYING MODULE

Introduction to Cyberbullying

Introduction

As the world becomes more reliant on technology, it's important for children to grow up understanding how the online world works and what positive interactions look like. The Digital Matters platform is designed to help children navigate online issues in a way that allows them to take risks and explore consequences without harm.

The platform is divided into two sections that help your child develop their understanding of each online safety topic.

The first is **Interactive Learning**, which is designed for use in the classroom. It features a range of quiz-based questions to encourage children to think about and discuss key points in the lesson. As a parent, you can also make use of Interactive Learning to help introduce your child to the topics.

The second is **Once Upon Online**, a story-based activity where your child has to make choices to move the story forward. Users receive instant feedback on how their decisions impact the characters, helping children to understand that what they do online has real world consequences. The story allows them to make choices just to see where they go without putting themselves in harm's way.

Digital Matters is a great way to explore online safety in a realistic and engaging manner.
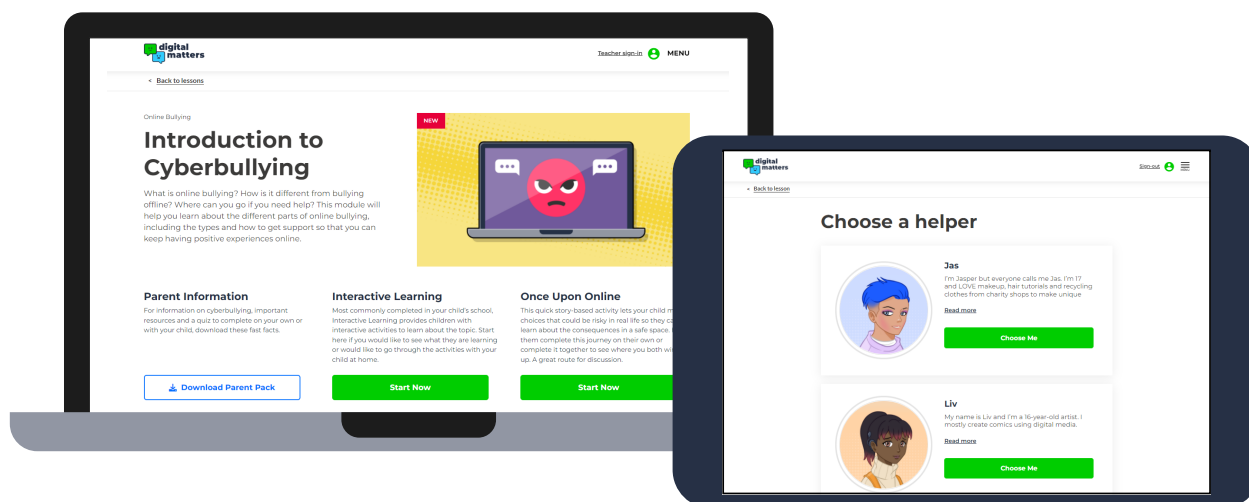
Take Home

As a part of the lesson, your child's teacher may assign take-home work to consolidate their learning. Teachers may choose from the following activities or may have their own activity for children to do.

Option 1: Your child might show you a printout of their Once Upon Online journey. With your help, they may be asked to consider what other choices the characters may have made and how those choices would have led to different results. Because the Once Upon Online story only allows children to select one of two choices, it's important to discuss other possibilities. It's unlikely that in real life children will only have two choices.

Option 2: Your child may share their Once Upon Online journey printout with you. There are also a selection of reflection questions for children to consider once they complete their journey. They can then discuss their journey and these questions with you. At home, you may want to do the journey on your own to see what ending you get and to compare the choices you each made. You may also wish to complete the journey a second time with your child and discuss the potential outcomes for each decision point.
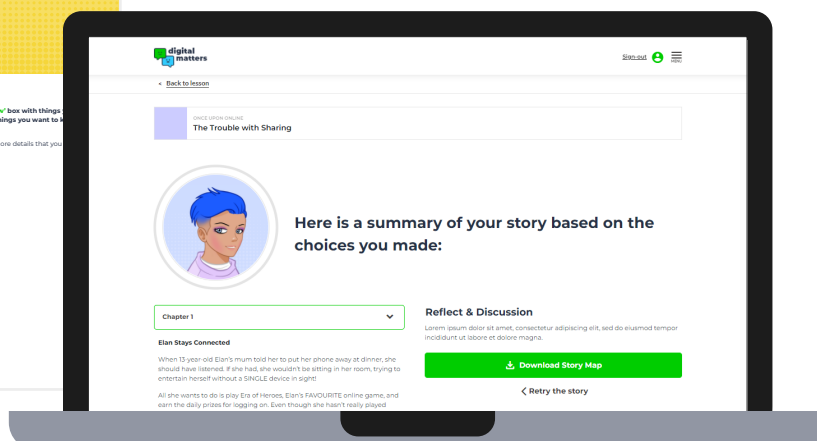
Online Bullying

Fast facts you need to know

Use these facts to have informed conversations about the topic with your child:

- 93% of children aged 8-11 go online for about 13.5 hours per week

- 1 in 5 children aged 10-15 experience at least one type of online bullying

- 52% of children who experience online bullying would not describe it as bullying

- most common bullying behaviour includes name-calling, swearing at or insulting someone and sending nasty messages

- around 3 out of 4 children who experience online bullying have experienced some of it during school time

- Roughly 7 out of 10 children were emotionally affected by online bullying they experienced

- 34% of boys who experience bullying did not report it compared to just 15% of girls

- most bullying is reported to a teacher or parent

Sources: Office for National Statistics: Online bullying in England and Wales, year ending March 2020

Ofcom Children and Parent's Media Use and Attitudes 2018

Online Bullying Quiz

How much do you know about online bullying?

Keep your child's engagement with the module going by competing against each other on the quiz below. Who can score the highest?

Once finished, check out the answers at the end of the document to see how you did before learning a little more about each one.

1. Which of the following is an example of cyberbullying?

    a. someone teasing another person at school because they don't have the latest device

    b. blaming each other for the loss of an online game before starting a new one

    c. someone sending a person nasty private messages daily

    d. none of these

2. Which of the following are resources children can use if they experience or witness cyberbullying?

    a. you (the parent/carer)

    b. the safeguarding teacher at school

    c. Childline or other helplines

    d. all of these

3. Which of the following actions is NOT a positive action to take when bullied online?

    a. fighting back (i.e. replying with nasty messages)

    b. reporting or blocking the bully

    c. speaking with a counsellor at school, online or through a helpline

    d. these are all positive

4. Discuss with your child: what does cyberbullying look like? What are some of the different kinds of cyberbullying someone might experience or witness?

5. How does someone become digitally resilient online?

    a. by understanding how to navigate the online world safely

    b. by knowing how to use report and block functions (and using them when needed)

    c. by understanding how to face difficult things in a positive way

    d. all of these
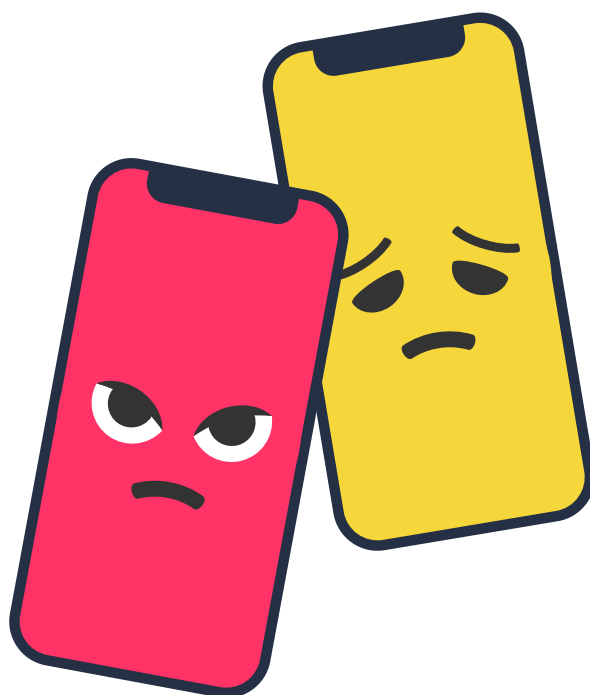
Recommended Resources

This list of resources will help you learn more about cyberbullying so that you can be prepared from online bullying issues that might come up.

Internet Matters

Cyberbullying Advice Hub
For expert advice on what cyberbullying looks like and advice on how to deal with it and support affected children.

Cyberbullying Conversation Starter Guide
For advice specific to vulnerable children and specific age groups.

The Stop, Speak, Support code
Help children tackle cyberbullying with this code created for young people by young people. It offers simple steps for positive action to deal with cyberbullying.

BBC Own It: 7 foolproof tips to beat cyberbullying
Advice for children about dealing with cyberbullying and preventing themselves from bullying others.

Childline: Bullying, abuse, safety & the law
A variety of resources for children on topics from types of bullying to children's rights and the law.

Childnet: Help for 4-11 year olds
Get advice on a variety of topics, including cyberbullying, that is specifically catered to children.

National Bullying Helpline: Help and advice for children
Practical advice for children who may be experiencing or witnessing bullying online or off.

Answers to the Online Bullying Quiz

1. **The answer is c - someone sending a person nasty private messages daily:** A could be an example of bullying, but because it happens offline (at school), it is not cyberbullying. B could happen online, but an argument is not bullying. It needs to be persistent and repeated to be considered bullying. If someone sends/receives targeted messages daily, that is persistent and repetitive. Nasty messages that are intending to insult or cause a negative reaction would be cyberbullying.

2. **The answer is d - all of these:** there are always a variety of actions children can take to stop cyberbullying. Helplines like Childline, Childnet and the National Bullying Helpline exist to support children, especially if they don't feel comfortable talking to someone they know. Trusted adults like a parent, carer or teacher are also a great resource for children to use to get advice or support.

3. **The answer is a - fighting back:** fighting back with nasty messages can make the situation worse, especially if it is online and especially if the messages are public. It is far better to stop all communication with whoever is doing the bullying. Your child should be encouraged to make use of the reporting/blocking functions available as well as being encouraged to talk to you or a teacher if they need further advice or support.

4. **The answers could include:** hurtful behaviour online that is persistent, repetitive and intentional. The unique thing about cyberbullying is that it is a lot more difficult to escape compared to traditional bullying as the victims have the messages on devices they use at home. Different types of bullying include trolling, dissing and excluding. Ask your child to recall what these types of bullying look like!

5. **The answer is d - all of these:** digital resilience means you understand how to navigate the online world in a way that keeps you happy and safe. This includes understanding what actions to take when faced with harmful or negative content like cyberbullying such as knowing how to report and block or where to go for additional support.