

**Social media/cyberbullying**

The use of technology and social media is now very present in our day to day lives, including those of year 5 and year 6 children.

Research suggests that social media can be more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol and that it can have a negative effect on emotional health and wellbeing.

Numbers indicate that social media and cyberbullying has had a detrimental effect on more girls’ mental health than boys, although boys are fast catching up.

Social media use can affect sleep, body image, self-esteem and can increase the chance of children suffering from depressive symptoms.

Cyberbullying is also on the increase; in 2017 more than 7 in 10 children had experienced some form of cyberbullying. Therefore parents need to recognize the possible signs and be able to support their children.

**Signs your child may be being bullied on line:**

* An increase or decrease in use of technology
* Showing emotional responses to messages which are received
* Hiding their device and not wanting to discuss what they have been doing on it
* Closing old accounts and opening new ones
* Avoidance of social situations
* Becoming withdrawn and losing interest in outside activities

**What can parents do?**

* Educate yourself and your children about staying safe online
* Maintain open lines of communication with your children
* Build self-confidence and self-esteem in your children
* Set rules about how the child acts on line – children can be a victim of bullying one day and a perpetrator the next without recognising it
* Promote time without devices
* Remove devices in the evening so that they cannot be used overnight
* Maintain privacy controls on devices and Wi-Fi
* Spend time with your child finding out what platforms they are accessing to ensure that they are age appropriate

**What a young person should do if they are being bullied on line:**

* Tell an adult
* Do not respond to the messages/e-mails
* Do not be an accomplice to the bullying – do not forward messages on
* Save messages and take a screen shot in case this is needed at a later date

**Remember – social media and technology have many positive uses but we need to be aware when this is not the case.**

**Useful websites/numbers:**

* [www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk](http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk)
* [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
* [www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/cyberbullying)
* **National bullying support line** 0845 225 5787
* **Bullying support line** 01708 765 200