

BEYOND THE SCHOOL GATES

EXPERIENCES OF CYBERAGGRESSION
AND CYBERBULLYING AMONG
ADOLESCENTS IN THE UK



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM



**Sir John Cass's
Foundation**

Published: October 2017
ISBN 978-0-9932647-2-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the Publisher in writing.

To cite this document, please include the following:

Popovac, M. (2017). Beyond the school gates: Experiences of cyberaggression and cyberbullying among adolescents in the UK. Joint publication by the University of Buckingham and Sir John Cass's Foundation.

University of Buckingham

Yeomanry House, Hunter Street, Buckingham, MK18 1EG,
www.buckingham.ac.uk

Sir John Cass's Foundation

31 Jewry Street, London, EC3N 2EY | <http://sirjohncassfoundation.com>

Disclaimer: Any views or opinions presented do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation. The Foundation accepts no liability for the content, or consequences of any actions taken on the basis of the information provided.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword: Vice Chancellor, University of Buckingham, Sir Anthony Seldon	1
Foreword: Treasurer and Chairman, Sir John Cass's Foundation, Dr. Kevin Everett (Deputy)	2
Executive Summary	3
Key Statistics	4
Glossary	5-7
Researcher Profile	8
1. Introduction	9
2. The Issue of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying	9
2.1 What is Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying?	9-11
2.2 Why is Cyberbullying a Serious Issue?	12
3. The Research	13
3.1 How was the study conducted?	13
3.2 Experiences of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying in the UK: Key Research Findings	14
3.2.1 Access to Technology and Main Online Activities	14
3.2.2 Prevalence and Nature of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying in the UK	15-18
3.2.3 Outcomes of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying	20
3.2.4 Reporting and Parental Awareness of Incidents	21-22
4. Conclusion and Key Recommendations	24
4.1 What do we need to do?	24
4.2 How do we do this?	25
4.2.1 Government and Public Campaigns	26
4.2.2 Drawing on External Support Services	27
4.2.3 Collaboration between Parents and Schools	27
4.3.4 School Policy, Reporting and Support	28
4.2.5 Parental Awareness and Parent-Child Communication	29
4.2.6 Enhancing Resilience and Skills of Adolescents	29
5. Final Thoughts	31-32
6. Further Reading	33-36
6.1 References	33-35
6.2 Useful Links	36



FOREWORD: VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM, SIR ANTHONY SELDON

Over my 35 year career in schools since the early 1980s, I saw many improvements in the quality of the experience of young people. But one area that did not see improvement was levels of unhappiness amongst the students, which probably deteriorated over the years. One factor that has been responsible for this change has been the rise of social media in all its various forms. So I am delighted to be writing the Foreword to this most important and timely report.

Social media has enriched the life of the young in many ways, as the report shows. But cyber-aggression and cyber-bullying have also resulted in untold distress among the young and, at its worse, in suicide. This report is badly needed because it is grounded on serious research into this vital area. The numbers affected by this abuse are, as the report shows, alarmingly high.

Cyber-bullying, the report shows is less common than bullying face to face, although both forms of aggression are linked. This finding surprised me. From my own experience, the anonymity of cyber-bullying encourages its use. The bully can hide behind the shelter, inflicting hurt and pain without compromising their own identity, or witnessing the distress they are causing face to face. It is the very remoteness of cyber-space that can bring out the very worst in human nature.

We now have the evidence about the seriousness of this issue. As the report says we need to act with a real sense of urgency and to have multiple responses from government and external support services, schools and parent bodies.

I am very pleased that the university where I am Vice-Chancellor, the University of Buckingham, in association with the Sir John Cass's Foundation, has been responsible for producing this report. Reading it has alarmed me, because I had not fully appreciated how widespread the problem is. The report shows that unless decisive and effective action is taken, untold number of children in the future will suffer from the abuse.

The emotional and psychological harm the young experience will impoverish their own lives and the lives around them. All too often in my experience, the bullies have themselves been bullied. We need to break this cycle of harm now. I commend this report most fully to all those involved with bringing up young people. The recommendations to be found in the following pages must be followed.

Sir Anthony Seldon
Vice Chancellor
University of Buckingham

FOREWORD: TREASURER AND CHAIRMAN, SIR JOHN CASS'S FOUNDATION, DR. KEVIN EVERETT (DEPUTY)

Founded in 1748 by City of London politician and philanthropist Sir John Cass (1661-1718), the Foundation has a rich history of supporting pioneering initiatives to promote participation and achievement for the most disadvantaged young people in the capital. The Foundation has evolved over its more than 250-year history to become one of the leading independent education charities in the UK.

We proudly continue to support the work of our founder through offering funding to schools, organisations and individuals-in-need across inner London. The Foundation also works hard to establish innovative partnerships with leading educational bodies to improve attainment and access to opportunity for young Londoners, always with a focus on how successful interventions can be scaled at a national level.



The Foundation continues to be at the forefront of debate, stimulating meaningful discussion and exploring new and often challenging topics faced by young people, professionals and the wider education sector. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that Sir John Cass's Foundation has partnered with expert researchers from the University of Buckingham to understand the issues faced in the 21st Century classroom.

There is a growing awareness that children who experience face-to-face bullying in schools may continue to be bullied online. This report is a first step for the Foundation in exploring the issues, solutions and support mechanisms needed to face this shift in behaviour.

We are sadly all too familiar with the impact bullying can have on a young person's educational attainment, level of attendance and general wellbeing. What we are less familiar with is understanding how these impacts change, worsen or lengthen with the move away from the school environment to an often hidden and 24/7 form of online bullying.

What was once largely contained to the classroom, the playground or the school gates is now following students, and in some circumstances teachers, home. Young people's access to personal devices means these new types of online behaviours can happen at the weekend, in the school holidays, and even whilst sitting next to mum or dad in what should be the safety of their home surroundings.

Understanding and tackling cyberbullying is in close alignment with the Foundation's strategy to improve pupil motivation, behaviour and achievement. It is also highly relevant in the Foundation's role as sole Trustee to two London schools. As an independent grant giving foundation we are able to fund research such as this that looks to identify the best ways to encourage and support children and young people's attainment and help them engage with, and stay in, education.

Technology has contributed significantly to improvements in education but it must be recognised that it also brings new risks. Traditional interventions may no longer be able to address the concerns of students, parents or teachers and we hope research such as this can go some way to developing an effective response.

This important and insightful report from the University of Buckingham will shine a light on this new and evolving issue. The Foundation looks to its partners and peers across academia, education, and the wider voluntary sector to start conversations, identify need and develop evidenced-based support to tackle this growing challenge.

The Foundation is grateful to our partners at the University of Buckingham for producing this interesting and timely report and to Richard Foley, our Chief Executive for commissioning this research. I am delighted that the Foundation is re-engaging with Sir Anthony Seldon, having previously worked with him on other projects during his time Wellington College, and we look forward to further collaboration in the future.

Dr Kevin Everett (Deputy)
Treasurer and Chairman
Sir John Cass's Foundation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of digital technology has increased considerably since the late 1990's and for young people in particular digital platforms are an integral part of their lives. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have a range of important benefits for children and adolescents, but children can also encounter a range of online risks that can have serious effects on their well-being and development. An increasing amount of research is being carried out into young people's experiences of cyberaggression and cyberbullying, which have been found to have serious psychological, emotional, behavioural and educational effects. This is an issue that not only impacts the individuals involved, but also has serious implications in relation to school safety and the school social climate. This report outlines a study conducted by the University of Buckingham and Sir John Cass's Foundation, that examined the online behaviours and experiences of 320 adolescents aged 13-18 years as well as the perceptions of 130 parents.

The findings showed that adolescents had a high level of access to ICTs and engaged in a number of online activities which were mainly social in nature. Most adolescents in the sample (69%) had experienced at least one type of cyberaggression, which was most likely to involve being called a hurtful name online, having a picture posted online to embarrass them, or having rumours or gossip spread about them online. Of these adolescents, 43% reported that they had been cyberbullied. These findings are towards the high end of those reported in other studies globally. In addition to victimisation, nearly half of adolescents (48%) admitted perpetrating an act of cyberaggression and most adolescents (77%) had witnessed cyberbullying while online. The findings show the complexity of cyberbullying acts and the need to address the multiple roles associated with these behaviours. When asked about their experiences in the past 12 months, a quarter of adolescents reported that they had been cyberbullied during this time. Although face-to-face bullying continues to be the most common form of bullying experienced by young people, experiences of cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying were often linked. Adolescents reported serious emotional effects due to these experiences. Our findings also indicated that adolescents were most likely to confide in friends about these experiences rather than adults and that parents and teachers were largely removed from young people's online experiences. This was clear from the data obtained from parents, which showed that they significantly underestimated their child's experiences and engagement in cyberaggression and overestimated their monitoring of ICT use in the home.

The findings in this report reflect the importance of working with adolescents to build digital literacy, empathy and resilience as well as the importance of including parents in online safety efforts. Importantly, the report advocates a multi-level approach to addressing the issue of cyberaggression and cyberbullying and highlights the need for action by government, external support services, funding bodies and organisations, schools and teachers as well as parents and young people. A comprehensive approach to tackling cyberaggression and cyberbullying and enhancing online safety of young people is needed, which would include effort at all levels. The report outlines key recommendations for involvement at each level in an effort to drive forward an impactful response to this important issue.

KEY STATISTICS

69%

of adolescents aged 13-18 years had ever experienced at least one type of cyberaggression

43% reported having ever been cyberbullied

ONE IN 4

adolescents (26%) were cyberbullied in the past year and 39.4% were bullied face-to-face

77%

of adolescents had ever witnessed cyberbullying while online

48% admitted that they had ever perpetrated at least one act of aggression against someone online

44% of victims also admitted to being perpetrators in a different context, highlighting that victimisation and perpetration were linked

80%

of victims knew the identity of their perpetrator in an act of online aggression

THE MOST COMMON EXPERIENCES

reported by adolescents were being called a hurtful or rude name, having one's picture posted online to embarrass them and having rumours or gossip spread about them online

Cyberbullying was most likely to occur on social networking sites, text messages via mobile phones or instant messaging apps, and in chat rooms and forums

Cyberbullying incidents were most likely related to one's appearance, followed by one's way of expressing oneself online, their sexuality or sexual orientation, and other aspects of their identity such as race/ethnicity or religion

41.3%

of adolescents reported being hurt or made to feel sad about something that someone said or did to them online

31.9% felt scared or worried about something someone said or did to them online

27.7% did not want to go to school on some days due to something that was said or done to them online

Psychological consequences relating to anxiety, depression and self-harm or suicidal thoughts were reported among cyberbullying victims

GLOSSARY: PLATFORMS



Facebook

A social networking service where users create profiles and add 'friends' to their network in order to interact with them. Users upload status updates and images that elicit responses from other users and can also interact in various Facebook groups and share common interests.



Twitter

A social networking and news service that involves posting short messages (140 characters). These messages ('tweets') are viewed by one's followers and interactions can occur.



Snapchat

A multimedia messaging service that allows image messaging and video stories ('snaps') to be shared either privately with friends or publicly with other users. Images are only available for a short time before being deleted, however various new features have been included that allow for saving of messages and snaps.



Instagram

An internet-based image sharing application that allows users to post images or videos with captions that can either only be viewed by one's contacts or be visible publicly.



Tumblr

A micro-blogging social network that allows users to post multimedia and other content to their blog page. Users can follow blogs of other users. Blogs can either be set to private or be visible publicly.



Reddit

A content rating and discussion website that allows users to upload their own content and also vote on content posted by others. Votes determine the positioning and visibility of the content posted on a particular page. Content is grouped in topics ('subreddits') such as gaming, books, movies etc.



What's App

An instant messaging service using mobile phone contacts. Users can communicate via text messages, short voice clips, audio and video calls, and share images and videos. Contact can occur between individuals or between groups of users.



Flickr

A website used to host images or videos that are shared between users.



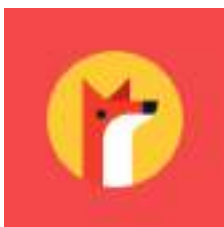
You Tube

A video sharing website allowing users to watch, comment on, share and subscribe to videos. They can also upload videos for others to view.



KiK

An instant messaging service that is not linked to a mobile phone number. Instead, the application allows for anonymity as users communicate via usernames.



Secret

An app where users can post anonymous messages within their circle of friends. These may also be viewed by friends of friends or be available publicly.



Whisper

An app similar to Secret. (above)



Viber

An instant messaging application that allows for voice calls and sharing of images and videos with contacts.

Overarching term for all technologies that hold information or communication features.

Text-based communication via the internet that occurs in real-time.

Software that can be downloaded via the internet onto smartphones and other devices.

Computer networks that allow for social interaction between users, where users create and manage a profile that is used to connect with others.

Behaviour involving deliberate provocation of other users on the internet (usually an online forum or group) by posting inflammatory, upsetting or off-topic content in order to obtain a reaction from others.

A deceptive behaviour that involves creating a fake online identity in order to communicate with others and build relationships with them online.

A means of tagging content on social networks which makes it easier for users to search for and locate content relating to a specific topic or theme.

Individuals' traceable online activities, posts and communications that are built up on the internet, which can have an impact on privacy and digital reputation.

A term used to describe social norms and ideas about socially appropriate online behaviours.
Also referred to as internet etiquette or online etiquette.

Sending or receiving sexually themed images, videos or comments using ICTs.

Distributing sexually explicit messages, images or videos of someone without their consent in order to humiliate them and damage their reputation. This often occurs in the context of private content that was shared within an intimate relationship.

Persistent acts of aggression by an individual or group that occur via ICTs and are intended to demonstrate power over the victim and break the victim down.

A broad term relating to any form of aggression that occurs via ICTs.

RESEARCHER PROFILE

Dr. Maša Popovac

Maša has experience working as a researcher at an organisation focused on violence prevention in South Africa, where she became interested in young people's experiences of online aggression. Her PhD, completed at the University of Buckingham in 2016, focused on cyberaggression, cyberbullying and other online risk experiences such as sexting, exposure to harmful content online, and online contact with strangers. Her research explored online experiences of adolescents in the UK and South Africa as well as parents' perceptions relating to these issues. Maša has presented her research on cyberbullying at conferences worldwide and is actively working on intervention and prevention strategies. She has successfully piloted an evidence-based online safety intervention with adolescents, and her current work centres on developing and implementing this intervention on a larger scale that would engage adolescents, parents and schools.



As a full-time lecturer in Psychology at the University of Buckingham, Maša teaches undergraduate modules in Cyberpsychology, Developmental Psychology and Social Psychology. She supervises various postgraduate projects in the department that relate to her research interests and collaborates on research with other universities both in the UK and abroad.

This research was conducted as part of Maša's PhD research. Special acknowledgements go to Dr. Philip Fine and Dr. Alan Martin from the University of Buckingham who supervised the study.





I. INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become central to daily life and have altered our social environments. For young users in particular, who have grown up in the digital age, ICTs are integral to their social lives. In fact, studies are showing a continued increase in access to ICTs, time spent online, and complexity of online behaviours of children and adolescents (Johnson, 2010). ICTs offer numerous benefits such as making rewarding social connections, offering spaces for self-expression, accessing information with ease, academic or occupational support, and entertainment. However, in addition to these benefits, individuals can also encounter a range of online risks, including cyberaggression and cyberbullying. These negative

online experiences can lead to serious psychological, emotional and behavioural effects on young people and can also have profound effects on their educational attainment and the school social climate. Research in this area is important due to continuous advances in technology and the need to understand both the positive and negative effects of technology on young people in order to implement effective strategies that promote positive digital literacy and resilience more generally, while addressing issues of online safety more specifically.

The University of Buckingham and Sir John Cass's Foundation conducted a study to examine the online risk behaviours and experiences of 13-18 year olds in the UK in order to highlight the priorities for research and funding into prevention and intervention efforts relating to online safety. The aim of the research is to drive forward an impactful response to cyberaggression and cyberbullying in schools. The present report outlines the problem of cyberaggression and cyberbullying among young people and describes the research that was undertaken along with the key findings. It also highlights key recommendations that emerged from the research, which is aimed at government, organisations and funding bodies, schools and teachers, parents, as well as children and adolescents. The recommendations advocate a multi-level approach to tackling cyberaggression and cyberbullying in schools in the UK.

2. THE ISSUE OF CYBERAGGRESSION AND CYBERBULLYING

2.1 What is Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying?

Bullying in its traditional sense is defined as repeated exposure to negative actions by one or more people over a period of time, creating an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Olweus, 1993). These negative actions can further be categorised as direct physical or verbal bullying or indirect bullying that involves exclusion from a group, gossiping and humiliation (Crothers & Levinson, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007).

Cyberbullying is defined in much the same way but does not constitute bullying of a physical nature. Instead, negative actions occur via any form of ICTs, including social media, text messages or instant messaging, images or videos from mobile phone cameras, blogs, websites, emails, phone calls, chat rooms or interactive online games. Cyberbullying, therefore, has been defined as an "aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376; Smith, 2015). According to Patchin and Hinduja (2006), cyberbullying includes:

- Teasing in a mean way;
- Calling someone hurtful names;
- Intentionally leaving someone out of something;
- Threatening someone; and
- Saying unwanted sexually-related things to someone.

Further examples of categories of cyberbullying behaviours have been outlined by Willard (2007) - see box.



Willard (2007) identified seven types of Direct and Indirect Cyberbullying Behaviours:

- **Flaming** involves the sending of angry, rude and confrontational messages often containing explicit and vulgar language. It often occurs in public online settings such as chat rooms and discussion groups. These are usually cyber fights and can result in a 'flame war'.
- **Harassment** involves repeatedly sending cruel, insulting or offensive messages via any electronic media. The persistence of these messages cause alarm, annoyance and substantial emotional distress to the target.
- **Denigration** is the act of spreading rumours, posting false information or making derogatory statements about others online in an attempt to damage the person's reputation or friendships. This also includes posting or sending digitally altered images that portray the person in a sexual or harmful way.
- **Outing and Trickery** is the dissemination of private information or talking someone into divulging personal information which is then publicised in an attempt to embarrass the individual. This is a tactic often used by former friends who share secrets or embarrassing photos that were provided in confidence.
- **Impersonation, Masquerading or Identity Theft** occur when an individual pretends to be someone else and posts material or sends offensive messages to others in order to damage the person's reputation. The perpetrator often hacks into the target's account and makes statements as if it were being voiced by the target.
- **Exclusion** is the act of intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- **Cyber Stalking or Cyber Threats** involve creating fear by repeatedly sending offensive messages and threats to harm the target or others. This type of cyberaggression is most often associated with emotional distress.

Importantly, definitions of cyberbullying acts involve behaviours where there is intentionality, imbalance of power and repetition involved (as outlined for face-to-face bullying by Olweus, 1993). Without these criteria, behaviours encompass acts of aggression, not bullying. A broader term, cyberaggression, is defined as "intentional harm delivered by the use of electronic means to a person or a group of people irrespective of their age, who perceive(s) such acts as offensive, derogatory, harmful, or unwanted" (Grigg, 2010, p. 152). Cyberaggression, therefore, includes a range of aggressive online acts, including cyberbullying, cyberharassment, cyberstalking and trolling. All acts of cyberbullying are thus also acts of cyberaggression, but not all acts of cyberaggression constitute cyberbullying. While cyberbullying is a repeated act, cyberaggression also encompasses one-off experiences of online aggression that might equally have negative effects.

Studies have shown that face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying tend to be linked (e.g. Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008). As such, the online context can provide another space within which bullying can occur, rather than necessarily being a distinctly separate phenomenon (Jose et al., 2010). For many adolescents too, the distinction between online and offline is no longer separate as social interactions move fluidly from one context to another. Although these behaviours are often linked, cyberbullying also involves some unique features that are important to consider. For example, in an online context perpetrators can be anonymous and, as a result, may be less inhibited in their behaviours, potentially leading them to behave in harsher ways than they would do in a face-to-face interaction. The perpetrator also does not need to be confronted with the victim's reaction which makes an empathic reaction by the perpetrator unlikely as they cannot see the harm that is caused. There is also a much larger potential audience in cyberbullying when

comments or images spread beyond one's peers, school or neighbourhood, thereby exacerbating the distress caused to the victim. In addition, unlike face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying can occur continuously throughout the day making it difficult to escape as it does not rely on a physical environment for its manifestation. Due to these key differences between online and offline contexts, there is some debate regarding the applicability of some of the criteria used in the face-to-face bullying definition (i.e. intentionality, repetition and power balance) in cyberbullying (for discussion see Corcoran, Guckin & Prentice, 2015; Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009; Menesini et al., 2012). Therefore, examining both cyberbullying and cyberaggression - which can be a one-off encounter that also has negative effects - is of interest.



HOW IS BULLYING THAT OCCURS ONLINE UNIQUE?

- Perpetrators can be anonymous which may result in harsher behaviours due to lower fear of consequences associated with their behaviour.
- Perpetrators are not confronted with a victim's reaction and do not have to face the consequences with regard to the harm they have caused.
- There is a much larger potential audience online, with the possibility of comments or images spreading beyond one's immediate environment.
- Cyberbullying can be relentless and occur at any time of day or night, making it difficult for victims to escape.

2.2 Why is Cyberbullying a Serious Issue?

Experiences of cyberbullying can have serious psychological, emotional and behavioural effects both for the victim and perpetrator (Beckman, Hagquist, & Hellström, 2012; Gámez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013; Kowalski & Limber, 2013). In fact, those who are both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying displayed the most serious psychiatric and psychosomatic problems (Sourander et al., 2010). More generally, online peer victimisation is associated with general psychological distress and poor psychosocial adjustment (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Both cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying have been linked to lower self-esteem (Kim & Leventhal, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010), substance abuse and delinquency (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Online peer victimisation was also linked to depression, anxiety and eating disorders (Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols, & Storch, 2009). Depression in particular can lead to suicidal ideation and suicide attempts over time. Studies have shown that, for females especially, there was a strong link between online victimisation and depression, with depression being linked to suicide attempts (Bauman, Toomey & Walker, 2013).

Findings also show that the effects of cyberbullying can manifest themselves in psychosomatic ways due to chronic stress, with cyberbullying victims experiencing headaches and recurrent abdominal pains as do victims of traditional bullying (Beckman, Hagquist & Hellström, 2012; Gini & Pozzoli, 2013). Furthermore, emotional effects include frustration, fear, anger and feeling upset (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Cyberbullying also has potential educational outcomes, with links to school drop-out and absenteeism, low school commitment, diminished concentration, lower academic performance and school violence (Bauman, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). It has also been linked to not feeling safe at school more broadly (Sourander et al., 2010), indicating that this issue is also a major school safety concern. Unfortunately, many children do not report incidents to parents or teachers and adults often only find out about situations once they have become very serious. Thus, cyberbullying can continue for extended periods, thereby aggravating its negative effects.



Cyberbullying has been linked to

- Lower Self-esteem
- Substance Abuse
- Delinquency
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Headaches
- Eating Disorders
- School Absenteeism
- Poor Concentration

Cyberbullying is a global issue, with studies showing a prevalence rate ranging from 20-40% (Tokunaga, 2010). A study conducted in six European countries showed a prevalence rate of 21.4% among 14-17 year olds (Tsitsika et al., 2015). In England, 35% of 12-13 year olds and 40% of 14-15 year olds had been cyberbullied (Tarapdar, Kellett, & People, 2013). These studies clearly show that cyberbullying is an important issue in the UK as it is globally, and given its serious consequences described earlier, it is not surprising that this issue has been characterised as a serious societal-level health concern (Tokunaga, 2010). Not only is this a pertinent issue in terms of children and adolescents' well-being and development, but it is also an educational and safety concern in schools. Importantly, cyberbullying does not only occur between children and adolescents, but adults can also be targets of cyberbullying. In the school context reports have recently emerged of teachers being subjected to online abuse by students. Therefore, this is a major current concern within the school context for both young people and adults and has serious implications in terms of school safety and a positive school social climate.

3. THE RESEARCH

3.1 How was the study conducted?

Previous research of 92 young people aged 11-16 years old in 14 London-based schools in 2005 was one of the first to highlight the nature and extent of cyberbullying in London schools (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho & Tippett, 2006). This 2006 report, prepared for the Anti-Bullying Alliance, found that cyberbullying was of significant concern and that 22% of 11-16 year olds experienced cyberbullying at least once over the last few months. The University of Buckingham, with support from Sir John Cass's Foundation, conducted a study examining the online experiences of 320 adolescents (females: $n = 211$; males = 109) aged between 13-18 years (with a mean age of 14.6). Adolescents were from year groups 9-13 in two government-funded schools located outside of London, in Buckinghamshire. Whilst the two schools that participated in this study are located outside of London, they provide up-to-date findings that reflect the situation of schools and experiences of young people across the developmental stage of adolescence. This most recent exploration into current trends aims to shine a light on a national issue whilst also providing a context for stakeholders looking to address cyberaggression and cyberbullying at a local level - an objective of our collaborator Sir John Cass's Foundation in their efforts to meet the evolving educational needs of London's young people. Technology has advanced rapidly since the 2006 report mentioned earlier, as have young people's access to and experience with ICTs. Thus, the findings reported here are a more current reflection of experiences among adolescents and provide a snapshot that is transferable to the experiences of many young people in inner-London and across the UK.

The 320 adolescents who took part in the research completed an anonymous questionnaire about their online behaviours and experiences, focusing particularly on their experiences of cyberaggression and cyberbullying. The questionnaire was administered at two time points, initially asking adolescents what they had ever experienced online in order to gauge the general prevalence and importance of the issue among young ICT users. This data was collected in 2014. One year later, 146 of the adolescents were asked to report on their experiences of both cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying in the previous 12 months in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the experience in a shorter time frame and to assess where the issue of cyberbullying fits in more broadly in relation to face-to-face bullying. In addition to this, a parent of each participating adolescent was invited to complete a questionnaire on their perceptions of their child's online behaviours and experiences in order to determine how accurate parents' perceptions were about their child's experiences or engagement in cyberaggression and cyberbullying. A total of 130 parents (females: $n = 105$; males = 25) aged between 32-66 years (with a mean age 47.1) completed the parent survey. The sections that follow highlight the key results from the data.



“Thus, the findings reported here are a more current reflection of experiences among adolescents and provide a snapshot that is transferable to the experiences of many young people in inner-London and across the UK.”

3.2 Experiences of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying in the UK: Key Research Findings

The following sections highlight some of the key research findings in relation to adolescents' online experiences, including their access to technology and online activities, the prevalence and nature of their experiences of cyberaggression and cyberbullying, outcomes of these experiences, reporting of cyberbullying and parental awareness.

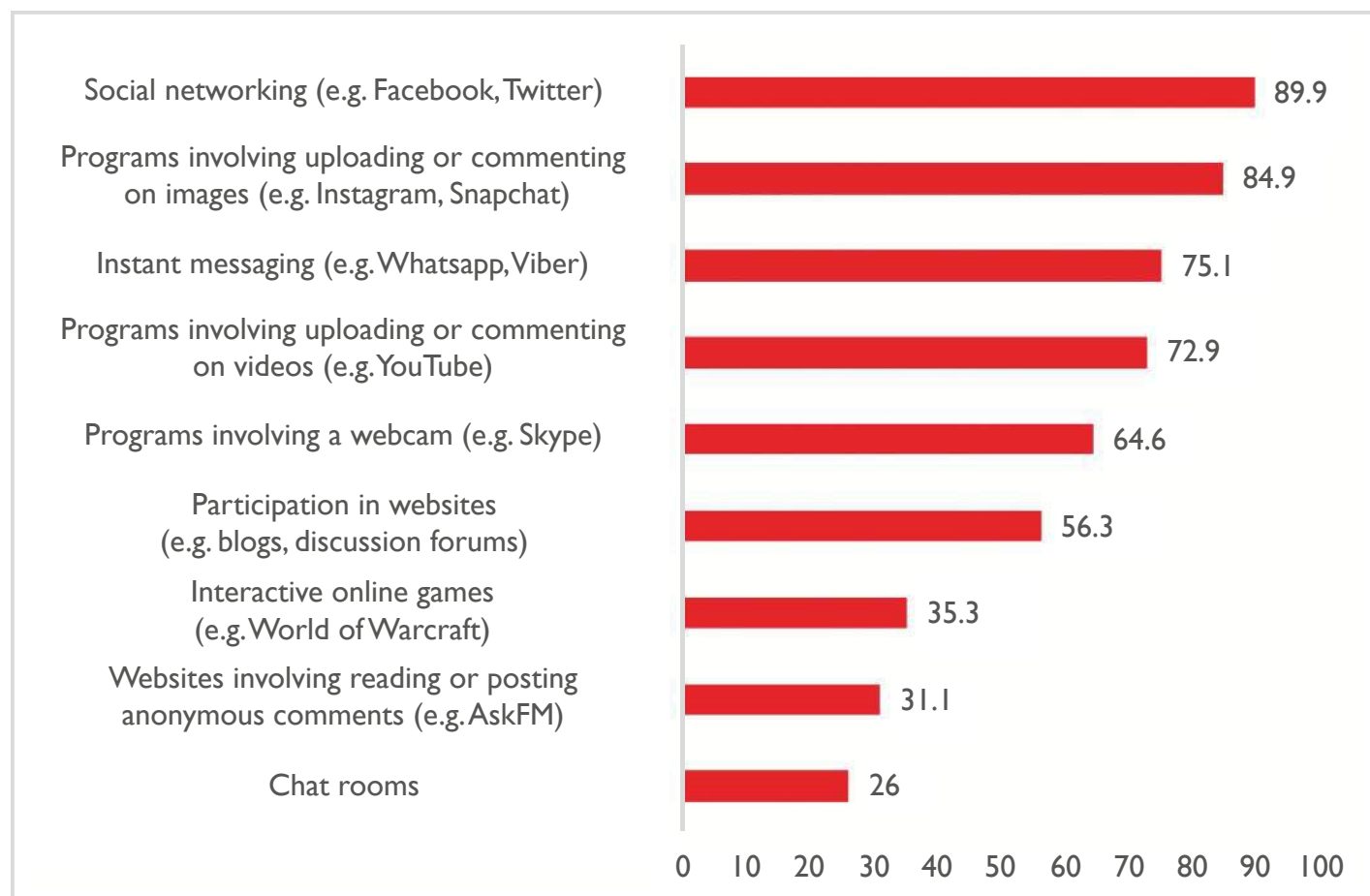
3.2.1 Access to Technology and Main Online Activities

As expected, access to technology was very high among young users. Most adolescents owned a mobile phone (94.7%, n = 303), had a computer at home with internet access (96.6%, n = 308) and had access to a tablet (75.6%, n = 242). Mobile phones were the primary means through which the internet was accessed. Since wifi access has increased and smartphones and data bundle prices have decreased, more and more young people rely on mobile devices for their online activities.

Adolescents engaged in a wide range of online activities as shown in Figure 1. Most adolescents interacted on social networking sites, instant messaging and video and image sharing programs (such as Instagram, Snapchat and Youtube), indicating that technology is used largely for socialising with others. Given that the most popular activities are social, there is ample opportunity to encounter negative interactions on a range of different programs.



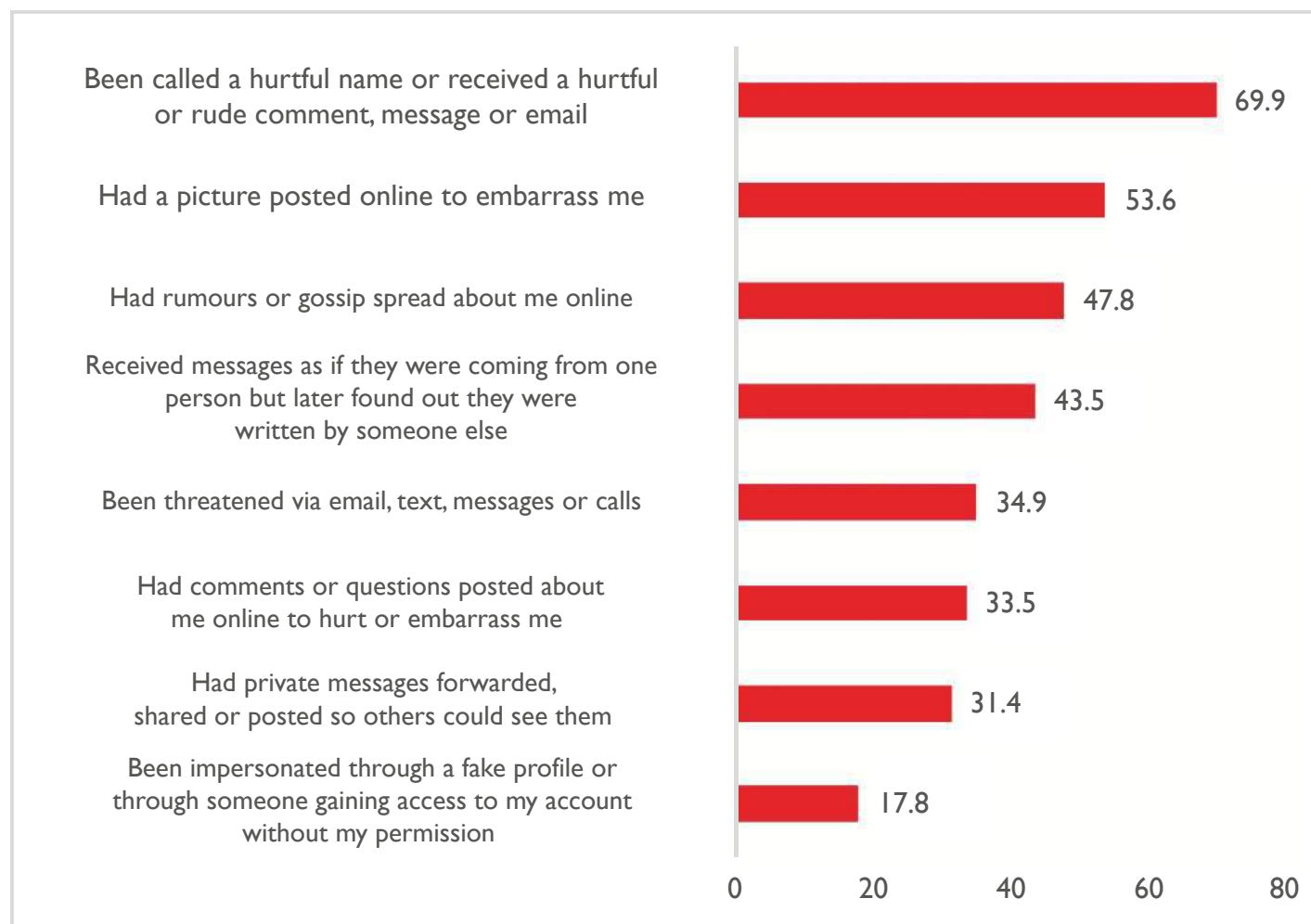
Figure 1: Adolescents' Online Activities (%)



3.2.2 Prevalence and Nature of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying in the UK

Most adolescents (69%) had experienced at least one type of cyberaggression. Adolescents reported that the most common experiences of cyberaggression included being called a hurtful or rude name, having one's picture posted online to embarrass them, or having rumours or gossip spread about them online (see Figure 2). These experiences were most likely to occur on social networking sites, text messages received on mobile phones or instant messaging apps, and in chat rooms and forums.

Figure 2: Types of Cyberaggression adolescents reported ever experiencing (%)



Of these adolescents, 43% defined their experience as cyberbullying. This proportion is towards the high end of the prevalence rates reported globally (e.g. Tokunaga, 2010). Males and females reported similar rates of both cyberaggression and cyberbullying, indicating no gender differences in these online experiences. However, experiences increased with age with those in middle adolescence (14-15 years) being particularly vulnerable. Most adolescents who had been cyberbullied (80%) knew the identity of the perpetrator, suggesting that most cases were not anonymous but were perpetrated by someone known to the adolescents offline.

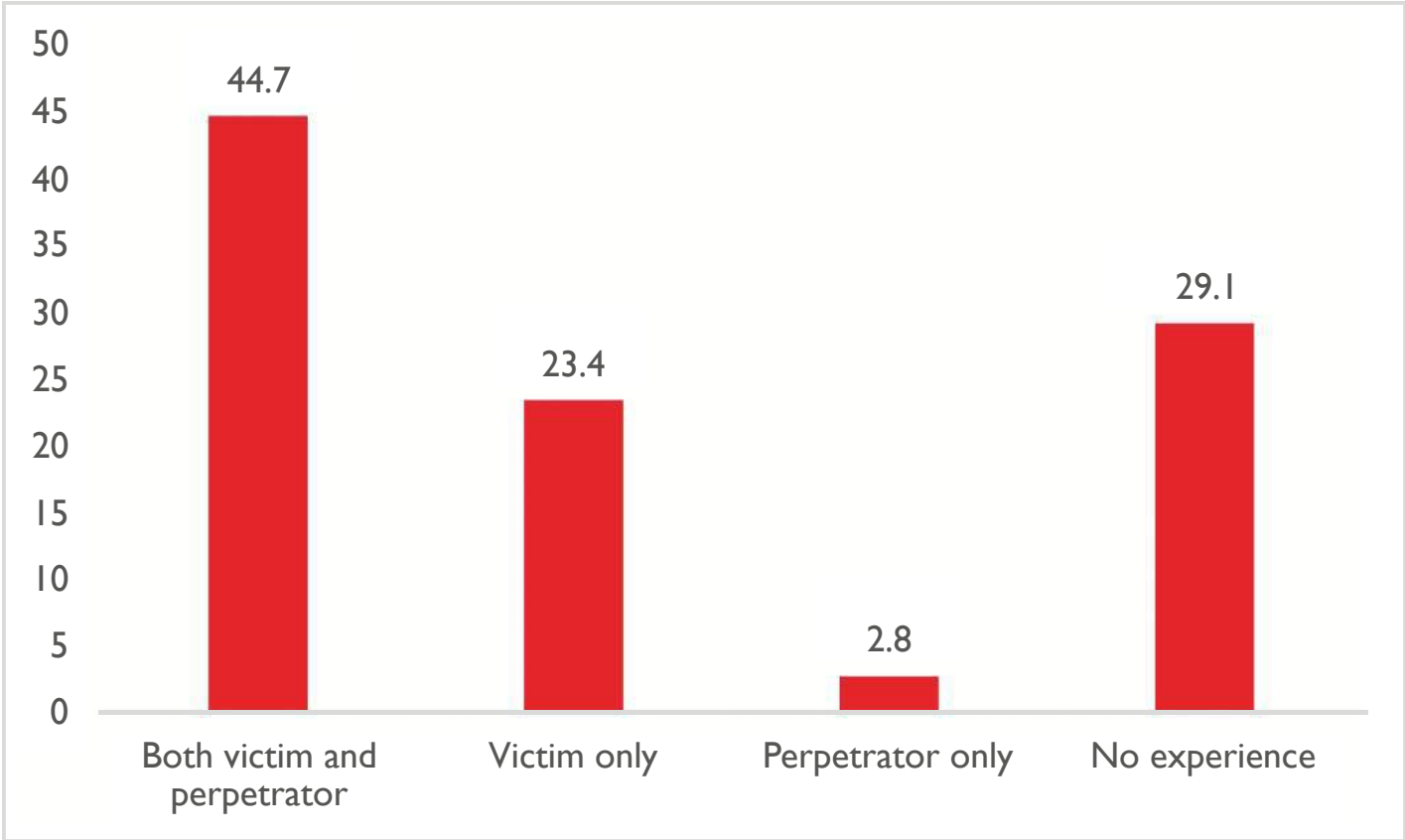
Apart from victimisation, most adolescents in the UK had witnessed cyberbullying while online (77%), and one in ten (11%) reported witnessing cyberbullying 'often' or 'very often' while online. Most adolescents also personally knew someone (such as a friend or sibling) who had been cyberbullied (71.6%).

Those who had experienced cyberbullying or had witnessed it were asked to reflect on what the incident was about. Their open-ended responses resulted in four themes of cyberbullying being reported most frequently. Adolescents indicated that cyberbullying was most likely to be about an individual's appearance (e.g. body shape or facial features), followed by their online expression in the form of comments they make or images they post online (e.g. making comments that are not deemed popular or in line with peer norms; using too many image filters), their sexuality or sexual orientation, as well as other markers of their identity such as race or religion.



Apart from being victims and witnesses, nearly half of adolescents (48%) also admitted perpetrating an act of cyberaggression, although few considered their behaviour as an act of bullying. There was a strong link between victimisation and perpetration, with 44.7% of victims also admitting to being perpetrators in a different context. Cyberaggression and cyberbullying are clearly complex issues with multiple roles (see Figure 3). Taken together, these findings indicate that intervention and prevention efforts should be targeting the range of roles in these behaviours, including victimisation, perpetration and witnessing of cyberbullying events – as the same individuals are likely to engage in a combination of these different roles.

Figure 3: Roles in Cyberaggression reported by adolescents (%)



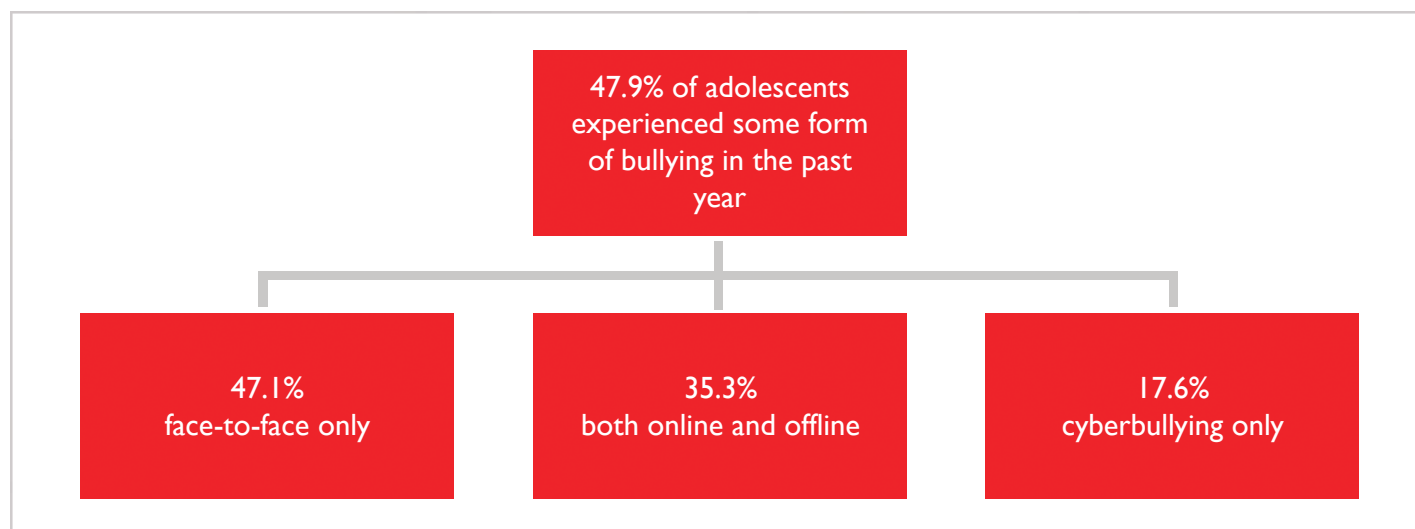
SUMMARY OF PREVALENCE

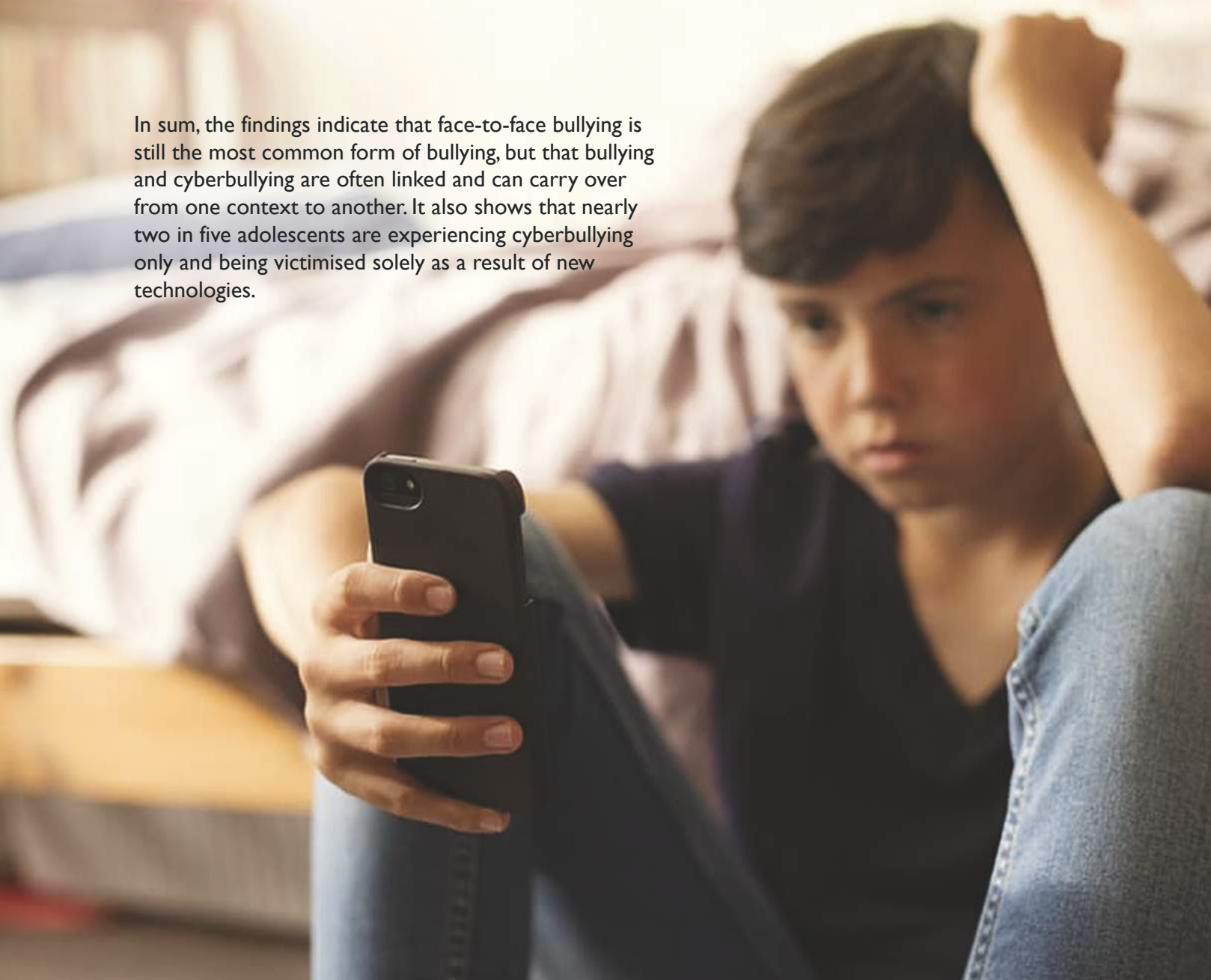
- 69% of adolescents aged 13-18 years had experienced at least one type of cyberaggression.
- 43% reported having been cyberbullied.
- One in four adolescents experienced cyberbullying in the past 12 months.
- No gender differences were found.
- Experiences increased with age, peaking at middle adolescence (14-15 years).
- 77% of adolescents had witnessed cyberbullying while online.
- 48% admitted that they had perpetrated at least one act of aggression against someone online.
- 44% of victims also admitted to being perpetrators in a different context, highlighting that victimisation and perpetration were linked.
- One in four adolescents (26%) were cyberbullied in the past year and 39.4% were bullied face-to-face.

At the second point of data collection, which asked about both online and offline experiences of aggression and bullying in the past 12 months, the findings show that one in four adolescents (26%) had been cyberbullied in the past year. Nearly two in five adolescents (39.4%) had been bullied face-to-face in the past year. These findings show that bullying - both online and offline - is currently a major problem among adolescents in the UK.

When these experiences were examined in more detail the study showed that nearly half of all adolescents in the study (47.9%) had experienced some form of bullying in the past 12 months. Of these adolescents, most experienced face-to-face bullying only (47.1%) and 17.6% experienced cyberbullying only. Importantly, the results also showed that online and offline experiences of bullying are often linked – in a third of cases (see Figure 4). This reflects the ways interactions can move fluidly from offline to online environments and speaks to ways in which these are no longer distinct contexts for young people. As previously noted, most adolescents reported knowing the identity of the perpetrator in the cyberbullying incident they encountered, further indicating the connection between the online and offline contexts.

Figure 4: Types of bullying experienced in the past year





In sum, the findings indicate that face-to-face bullying is still the most common form of bullying, but that bullying and cyberbullying are often linked and can carry over from one context to another. It also shows that nearly two in five adolescents are experiencing cyberbullying only and being victimised solely as a result of new technologies.

SUMMARY OF NATURE OF CYBERBULLYING

- 80% of victims knew the identity of their perpetrator.
- The most common experiences reported by adolescents were being called a hurtful or rude name, having one's picture posted online to embarrass them and having rumours or gossip spread about them online.
- Cyberbullying was most likely to occur on social networking sites, text messages via mobile phones or instant messaging apps, and in chat rooms and forums.
- Cyberbullying incidents were most likely related to one's appearance, followed by one's online expression (e.g. way of communicating or images that are posted), one's sexuality or sexual orientation, and other aspects of one's identity such as race, ethnicity or religion.
- Nearly half of adolescents experienced some form of bullying (either online or offline) in the past year.
- Online and offline bullying are often linked.



3.2.3 Outcomes of Cyberaggression and Cyberbullying

Two in five adolescents (41.3%) reported ever having been hurt or made to feel sad about something that was said or done to them online, while 31.9% had felt scared or worried about something someone said or did to them online. Just over a quarter of adolescents (27.7%) did not want to go to school on some days due to something that was said or done to them online. Not only does this highlight the link between the online and offline contexts further, but it also speaks to the potential educational outcomes and effects on the school social climate that these experiences can have for individuals.

Adolescents who had been cyberbullied were further asked to provide an account of how they had felt when they had the experience. Adolescents often reported feeling “worthless”, “empty” and “not normal”. Four key themes emerged from the open-ended responses, which underscored the severity of the experiences and their serious psychological, emotional and behavioural effects. These themes included feelings of sadness and depression (e.g. “I had depression but I tried to hide it”), low self-esteem (e.g. “it made me feel bad about myself and worthless”), feelings of rejection and isolation (e.g. “it felt like everyone hated me and I wasn’t wanted by anyone”), and thoughts of suicide and self-harm behaviours (e.g. “it made me feel like killing myself”).

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

- 41.3% of adolescents reported being hurt or made to feel sad about something that someone said or did to them online
- 31.9% felt scared or worried about something someone said or did to them online
- 27.7% did not want to go to school on some days due to something that was said or done to them online
- Those who had been cyberbullied often described feeling “worthless”, “empty” and “not normal”

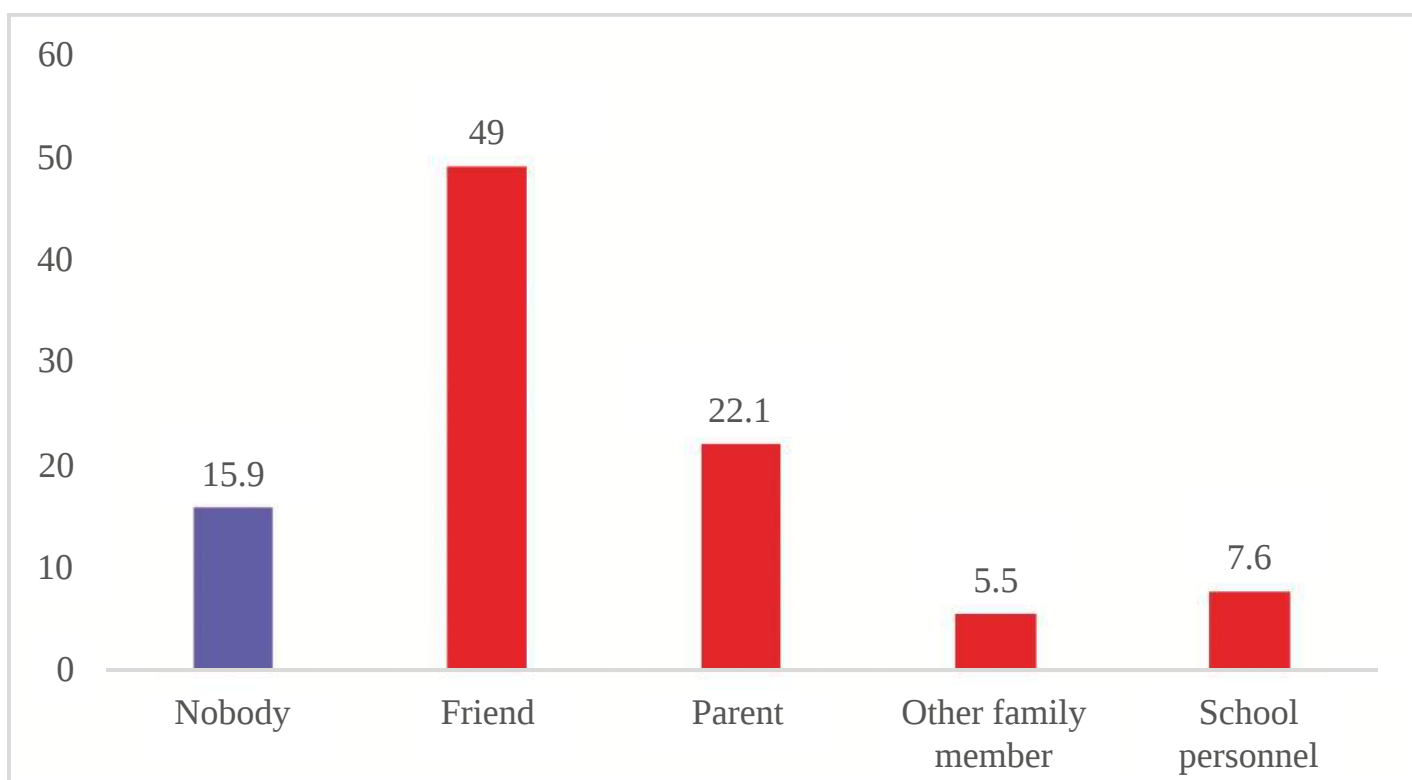
“Psychological consequences relating to anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts were reported among cyberbullying victims.”



3.2.4 Reporting and Parental Awareness of Incidents

Adolescents were most likely to tell a friend about experiences of cyberbullying (49%) rather than an adult. One in five adolescents (22.1%) reportedly told a parent about cyberbullying they had encountered. Few adolescents informed school staff. This reflects the importance of equipping and empowering adolescents to offer peer support as they are largely the first point of reporting of incidents compared to adults. It also suggests that adolescents may not trust adults to react appropriately when they report incidents to them, highlighting the need to educate adults so that they are better equipped to assist young people when facing negative online experiences. Of concern, however, is that 15.9% of adolescents told nobody about their cyberbullying experience, leaving them to deal with the incident and its potentially negative effects alone (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: People adolescents were most likely to tell about the Cyberbullying incident they experienced (%)





The findings from the parent responses showed that parents significantly underestimated their child's experiences and engagement in cyberaggression and cyberbullying. For example, while 53.6% of adolescents reported that they had ever had their picture put up online to embarrass them, only 22.1% of parents believed their child had had this experience. While 17.8% of adolescents reported that they had been threatened online, only 7.2% of parents believed this had happened to their child. Considering the fact that parents are not generally told about cyberbullying experiences (perhaps due to fear that access to technology will be reduced) it is not surprising that parents underestimated these experiences. Parents also underestimated their child's perpetration of cyberaggression. For example, while 19.8% of adolescents reported that they had taken a private message someone had sent them and forwarded it on to others or posted it online for others to see, only 6.1% of parents believed their child had ever engaged in this behaviour. Similarly, while 17.8% of adolescents admitted having spread rumours about someone online, only 7% of parents thought their child had done so. Together these findings suggest that adults tend to be largely removed from adolescents' online experiences and behaviours. This was confirmed by the views of adolescents, where 61.8% believed that adults generally do not know what adolescents are doing online.

Both adolescents and adults were also asked about monitoring related to technology use. Most adolescents (66.4%) stated that most of the time they can do anything they want online without anyone checking up on them. Although fewer parents were of this opinion, 2 in 5 parents (42.6%) admitted that their child could do anything they want online without a parental check on online activities. When asked about explicit rules regarding technology use in the home, views differed widely between adolescents and parents. Three-quarters of parents (76.9%) said that their child had rules to follow at home when using the internet, computer, tablet or mobile phone. However, only 38.2% of adolescents reported the existence of rules relating to technology use at home. These findings highlight the potential generational gap in knowledge and use of technology that has implications for online safety efforts. For example, adults may not understand the programs or activities their children are engaging in and therefore do not know which safety behaviours to discuss or create rules about. Parents may also be aware of issues relating to online safety but may not think that these issues are relevant to their own child, as they are likely to hold an optimistic bias about their own child's behaviour relative to other adolescents of their child's age.

Another important aspect relating to online safety is that adolescents do not always have the confidence in their capabilities of handling online situations. In fact, 38.1% of adolescents reported feeling worried about things that can go wrong when they are on the internet, 22.2% said that they cannot control the things that happen to them on the internet, and 21% said they felt afraid of being harassed or threatened on the internet. A total of 18.4% of adolescents also stated that they would not know what to do when faced with a dangerous situation on the internet. These findings reflect the importance of working with adolescents to build digital literacy, self-confidence and resilience as well as the importance of including parents in online safety efforts.



4. CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

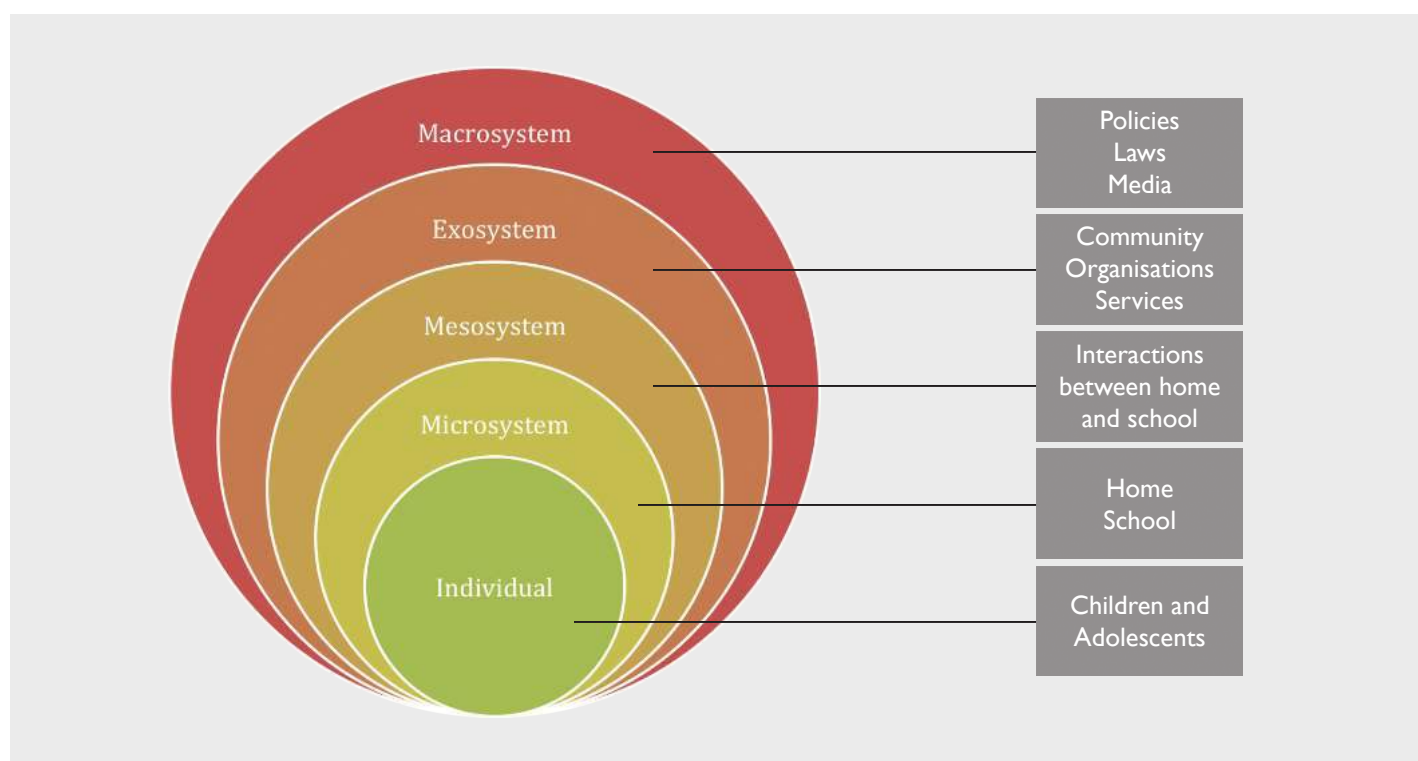
Based on the study findings it is clear that cyberaggression and cyberbullying are a common occurrence among adolescents. Most adolescents (69%) had experienced at least one type of online aggression. A total of 43% of adolescents had been cyberbullied, while 26% had experienced cyberbullying in the previous 12 months. Adolescents reported that these experiences had serious negative effects.

The findings also show that these experiences occur within multiple roles, with the same individuals often being a combination of victims, perpetrators and witnesses. This implies that intervention and prevention efforts must come from these multiple perspectives. It is also clear that cyberbullying should form part of broader anti-bullying strategies as face-to-face bullying is still the most common form of bullying reported by adolescents, and online and offline experiences of aggression and bullying also tend to be linked.

4.1 What do we need to do?

Based on the study findings, enhancing online safety of children and adolescents should take into account the fluidity between the online and offline contexts. More specifically, cyberbullying should be addressed within broader anti-bullying efforts at schools in order to offer a comprehensive approach. A multi-level approach, that includes children and adolescents at the individual level but also includes various levels of the environments that impact them, is needed (see figure 5 – for details on the bio-ecological systems theory see Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 2005).

Figure 5: Multi-level approach to Intervention and Prevention Strategies

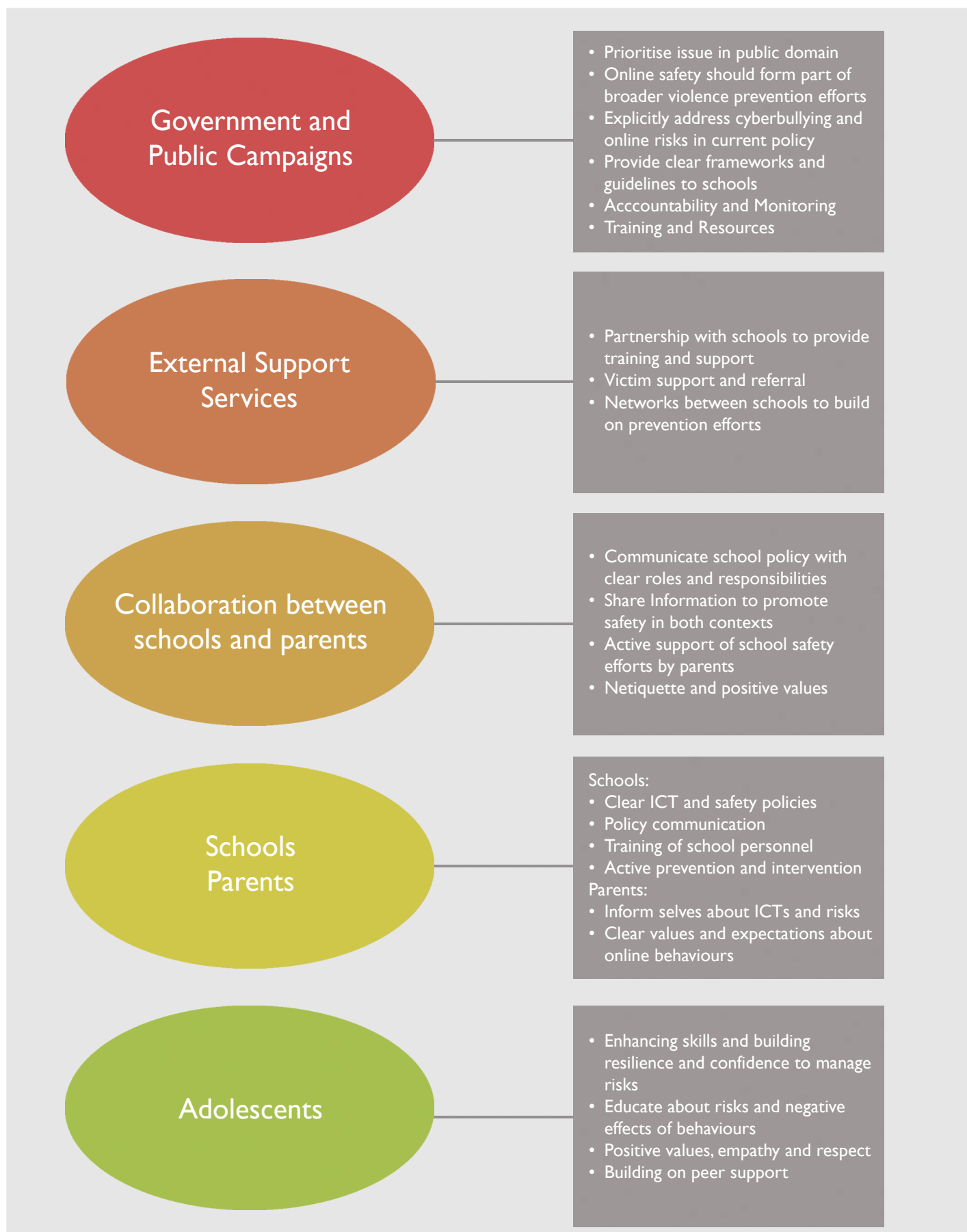


This perspective takes into account the need to intervene among young people, but to also engage the most immediate environments in which they interact as well as altering aspects within the broader context in order to create a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue. More specifically, a multi-level approach for addressing cyberbullying should involve (i) enacting laws, policies and educational media campaigns to bring the issue of cyberaggression and cyberbullying to the forefront (macrosystem level), (ii), engaging external support services, funding bodies and organisations (exosystem level), (iii) fostering collaboration between the two most immediate environments in young people's lives (i.e. home and school) (mesosystem level), (iv) targeting each of the two most immediate environments individually (i.e. home and school) (microsystem level), and (v) working with children and adolescents themselves (individuals level). Strategies that engage all of these different levels will ensure a comprehensive and effective approach to intervention and prevention efforts.

4.2 How do we do this?

Specific recommendations are outlined for each of the levels with the aim of tackling cyberaggression and cyberbullying in schools. The recommendations are summarised in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Summary of Key Recommendations



4.2.1 Government and Public Campaigns

At the macrosystem level, online safety issues generally and cyberbullying in particular should be prioritised in the public domain. This is crucial given the serious effects these experiences have on individuals, as well as the influence this has on educational outcomes and the school social climate. Understanding the link between online and offline aggression and bullying is key, as nearly half of adolescents in this study experienced some form of bullying in the past year. Cyberbullying should, therefore, form part of broader safety concerns and violence prevention strategies.

Increasing public awareness of these issues, the development of strategies, and educational media campaigns are important in supporting communities, schools, parents and adolescents. Clear guidelines should be issued to schools on anti-bullying policies, and accountability and monitoring measures should be put in place where schools have to demonstrate their anti-bullying strategies and their prevention and intervention efforts. Although steps have been taken in this direction, it is important to ensure a uniform approach with sufficient guidelines and support offered. Resources should be made available that can assist and support schools in tackling these issues more effectively. In addition, school personnel should be trained in the key online safety concerns and safety messages. They should also be informed about technology use and the activities and programs that their students engage in as this will give teachers more confidence to be able to discuss ICTs with their students. Training of teachers can also be important for earlier detection of incidents so that timely interventions can occur. Since young people rarely inform adults of their negative online experiences (particularly school staff), increasing teachers' knowledge can help to mitigate some of the serious long-term effects of these experiences.

Discussions regarding the integration of online safety messages into the curriculum should take place between policy makers, schools and other stakeholders. Integrating digital literacy and online safety into the curriculum at both primary and secondary school level should be undertaken as this will allow age-appropriate discussions relating to technology throughout key developmental stages. Teacher training in online safety is also important for this purpose, as it will empower teachers to integrate online safety messages into their lessons and will create more focused prevention efforts in the long term.

While attempts at many of the aspects mentioned have been made, it is often difficult for policies and action at this level to remain relevant and effective due to rapid changes in technology. Therefore, investment in large-scale research projects in this area, particularly those involving evaluation of online safety interventions is crucial. Working towards delivering appropriate interventions at schools should be a key current focus as evidence-based intervention and prevention is currently lacking.



“Increasing public awareness of these issues, the development of strategies, and educational media campaigns are important in supporting communities, schools, parents and adolescents.”



4.2.2 Drawing on External Support Services

External support services and organisations are key in providing resources and training and can assist by forming partnerships with schools in order to support them in their anti-bullying and school safety efforts. As previously outlined in relation to government, organisations and funding bodies can also assist by supporting further research and evidence-based interventions in this area. Funding is important in order to test effective strategies on a larger scale and to have a direct impact on schools by providing practical solutions. Thus, organisations are key in bridging the gap between research evidence and practice. In addition, specialised organisations can be an important source of referral and support for schools when issues arise. For example, support services offered to victims and perpetrators can occur through referrals to external organisations and services in more severe cases. Local police departments and other relevant organisations, particularly those with a focus on bullying, can also give talks to school personnel by highlighting the current issues, challenges and laws, thereby playing a role in educating schools and keeping them informed about developments. Since technology is constantly developing, staying informed about technological advances will allow for better implementation of online safety strategies. In addition, schools within the same geographical location can create a network of support by sharing best practices and ideas for addressing cyberaggression and cyberbullying.

4.2.3 Collaboration between Parents and Schools

Given that the school and home contexts are the most immediate and most influential environments in young people's lives, a key opportunity currently being missed is the potential for collaboration between schools and parents on these issues. Both environments play a crucial role in socialisation of children as responsible digital citizens through teaching positive values, empathy and internet etiquette ('netiquette') in online interactions. To enhance collaboration, school policies should be communicated to parents and should clearly outline their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policies. This will ensure that parents are aware of the school's rules and values related to technology as well as the key concerns in relation to adolescents' online behaviours in the school environment. This may also help to guide the rules and monitoring that parents implement in the home. Parents should be responsible for ensuring that their children comply with school policies and should help to create consistent approaches in the home that mirror the values at school. This can only be achieved through positive engagement and creating a common goal, rather than working as opposing forces and passing responsibility (and blame) onto each other. Schools can be key in disseminating information to parents in order to support and educate them about the latest developments in technology and its potential effects. Parents should take responsibility to engage with online safety issues and discuss these with their children.

4.2.4 School Policy, Reporting and Support

Since schools have the responsibility to protect adolescents against harm and ensure a safe school environment, there need to be clear policies relating to ICTs, anti-bullying strategies and school safety. Policies need to be communicated and enforced, and all incidents of online and offline bullying should be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. There should also be clear reporting mechanisms in place for students as well as disciplinary procedures to deal with incidents in a consistent manner. Individuals should be confident in reporting incidents, knowing that action will be taken and that they will be supported. Developing and communicating policies to the whole-school community will also ensure that students, parents and schools know about the reporting mechanisms, disciplinary measures and their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to these issues.

School personnel should be trained in policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms as well as the support services that are in place so that all adults in the school are confident about the approach being taken on these issues. They should also receive training about ICTs, cyberbullying and bullying more broadly, the effects of these behaviours on individuals and the potential warning signs of these behaviours. This will not only ensure prevention efforts but will also facilitate early intervention. Greater awareness of these issues is especially important given the low proportion of adolescents who reported incidents of cyberbullying to school staff. Schools should also be equipped to handle incidents of cyberbullying and be able to offer support to victims and perpetrators through school counsellors and referrals to other support services where needed in order to mitigate some of the potentially serious effects of these experiences.

Schools should take action to discuss these issues with their students, by building online safety and anti-bullying messages into their curriculum and creating lesson plans that discuss positive values and promote positive use of ICTs that encompass values of empathy and respect. These messages should begin early on and be extended to address more complex online behaviours and experiences as students get older. Early education will ensure that adolescents feel more confident and more skilled in handling online situations more effectively. Furthermore, empowering witnesses of cyberbullying to act and report incidents is also important, especially as friends are key confidantes in these experiences. More confidence in the policies and structures in place to handle these situations and confidence in adult reactions can facilitate reporting of incidents and encourage adolescents to seek support. There is also potential for building on peer support and learning in schools by nominating and training peer leaders. This can also be beneficial in shifting social norms with regard to online behaviours.

“Schools should take action...
and promote positive use of
ICTs that encompass values
of empathy and respect.”



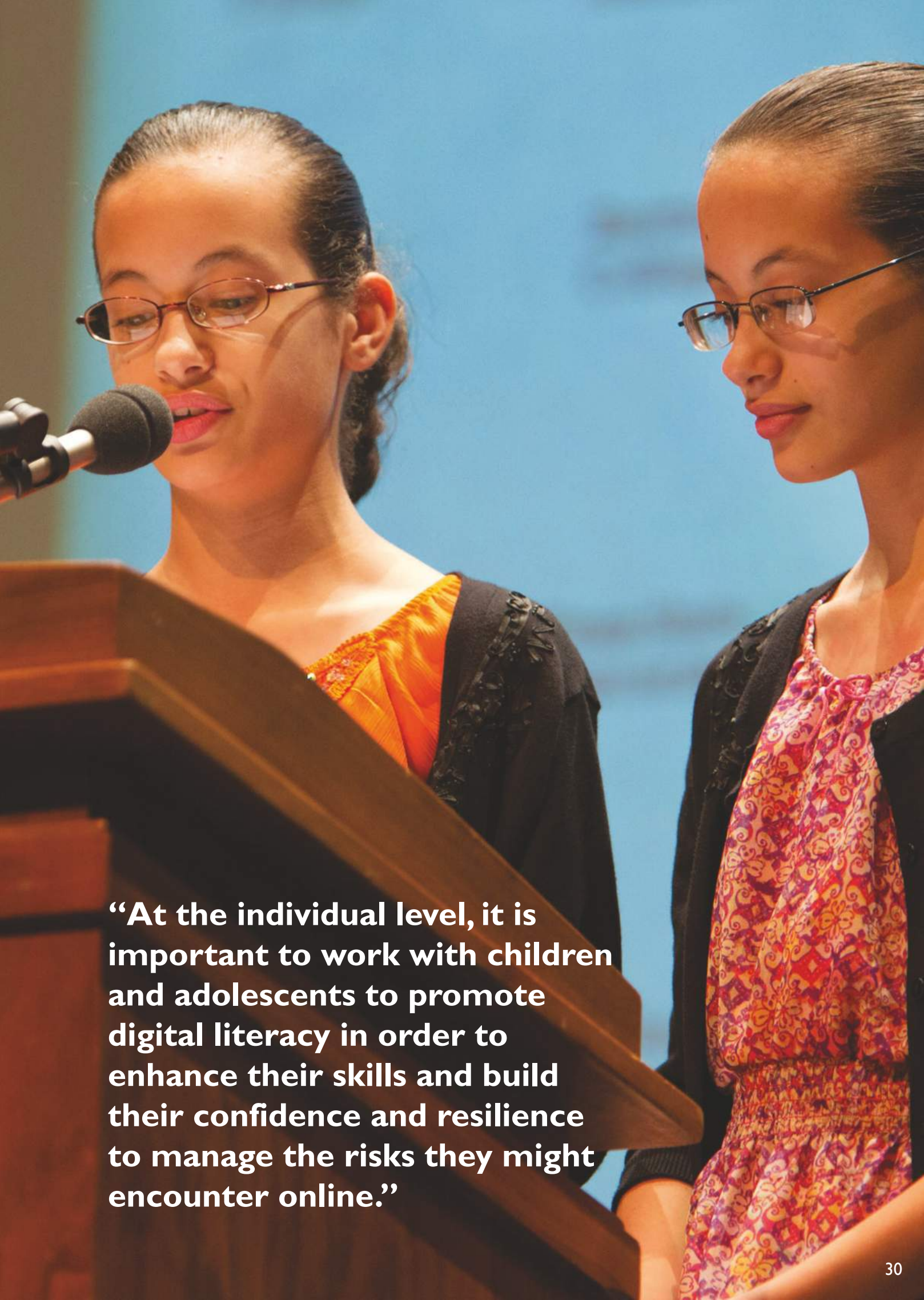
4.2.5 Parental Awareness and Parent-Child Communication

Parents should be encouraged to take on a more proactive stance and educate themselves about the programs and activities their children engage in and the potential risks that can be encountered as they have an important role to play in anti-bullying and school safety efforts. Parenting increasingly involves the digital domain and parents need to socialise their children into responsible digital citizens. While not all parents might have the skills or confidence to engage with schools and external organisations in the proactive ways suggested, schools should make policies relating to ICTs clear and available to parents and outline potential ways that parents can discuss policies with their children. Schools and external organisations can also target parents and provide them with information and resources needed to enhance their knowledge as well as practical suggestions on ways to approach discussions about ICTs with their children. These strategies can serve to enhance parents' self-efficacy about discussing issues of online safety. Schools can assist by engaging parents on issues relating to ICTs at parent evenings, by sending information home via pupils, and by inviting parents to discussions about issues that affect the school community. In particular, parents should be encouraged and supported by schools to engage in discussion-based strategies to mediate online risks by keeping open lines of communication with their children. Open lines of communication about these issues will ensure that children feel able to disclose incidents to their parents. Parents should also be able to feed back any concerns, issues or ideas to schools with regard to online safety issues and policy.

4.2.6 Enhancing Resilience and Skills of Adolescents

At the individual level, it is important to work with children and adolescents to promote digital literacy in order to enhance their skills and build their confidence and resilience to manage the risks they might encounter online. Understanding the risks and their responsibilities in their online behaviours will equip them to navigate the online environment and take ownership of their online safety, while being supported by their two most immediate environments and broader campaigns and policies. Information about risks and open discussions about the consequences of their behaviours on others is important in fostering positive social norms in the online context and promoting empathy and respect. Adolescents should also be taught prosocial conflict resolution skills that can help them in both the online and offline environments and will reduce the potential for situations to escalate. Practical skills such as privacy and security settings, blocking and reporting should also be taught. Another important aspect is enhancing bystander intervention for those who witness incidents. This should be done by promoting peer support so that adolescents feel confident in offering assistance and support to their peers. Focus should be on socialising young people into responsible and competent ICT users as fear-based messaging by adults or attempts to prevent access to technology are ineffective and unhelpful in developing resilience and core digital skills.





“At the individual level, it is important to work with children and adolescents to promote digital literacy in order to enhance their skills and build their confidence and resilience to manage the risks they might encounter online.”

5. FINAL THOUGHTS

Cyberaggression and cyberbullying are a common occurrence among young people and have potentially serious psychological, emotional, behavioural and educational effects. Not only are these experiences detrimental to young people's development and well-being in both the short- and long-term, but they also affect their attachment to and experience with education. These issues also influence the school environment more broadly.

The findings in this report outline the need for a comprehensive approach to tackling the issue of cyberaggression and cyberbullying that involves urgent engagement by multiple role-players. This approach involves targeting children, adolescents, parents and schools as well as engagement by organisations, funding bodies and government.

Current priorities involve:

Placing the issue of online safety higher on the public agenda so that it forms part of broader anti-bullying and violence prevention efforts

Funding further research on these issues, especially the development of evidence-based intervention and prevention strategies

Developing clear guidelines for schools, supporting schools with the challenges they face in implementing appropriate policies, and enhancing teacher training on online safety

Engaging with and working with parents to equip them to be able to address online safety with their children

Providing early education in online safety and digital literacy from childhood into adolescence in order to build resilience and equip young people with the skills needed to use ICTs safely

A comprehensive approach with engagement by all of the relevant stakeholders in this area will ensure that children and adolescents benefit from the social and educational opportunities afforded by ICTs while minimising their potential risks. Attempts to reduce ICT use of young people in order to keep them safe are ineffective and counterproductive as they do not equip young people with the skills, self-efficacy or resilience to be able to take ownership of their online safety or to learn to navigate the online environment and the risks they may encounter. Instead, working towards promoting digital skills and literacy of young people and adults alike is likely to lead to more positive outcomes. There is a sense of urgency in implementing the recommendations made in this report at all levels given that access to and use of ICTs - and any potential negative effects associated with their use - are only likely to increase in prevalence and complexity as technology evolves. The rate at which young people's technological skills far outpace that of their parents and teachers also makes it difficult to educate and intervene on online safety issues in an effective way. Engagement at multiple levels by all relevant stakeholders can ensure proactive, coordinated and up-to-date action and will allow for the development and implementation of more effective intervention and prevention efforts in order to build digital skills and literacy for the next generation.

A photograph of a person walking away from the camera on a paved path in a park. The path is made of light-colored bricks and is flanked by large, leafy trees. The ground is covered in dappled sunlight and shadows. In the background, there is a grassy area and a small building. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

“A comprehensive approach with engagement by all of the relevant stakeholders in this area will ensure that children and adolescents benefit from the social and educational opportunities afforded by ICTs while minimising their potential risks.”

6. FURTHER READING

6.1 References

Bauman, S. (2007).

Cyberbullying: A virtual menace. Paper presented at the National Coalition Against Bullying National Conference, 2-4 November 2007. Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.ncab.org.au/Assets/Files/Bauman,%20S.%20Cyberbullying.pdf>

Bauman, S., Toomey, R. B. & Walker, J. L. (2013).

Associations among bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide in high school students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36(2), 341–350.

Beckman, L., Hagquist, C. & Hellström, L. (2012).

Does the association with psychosomatic health problems differ between cyberbullying and traditional bullying? *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17(3-4), 421–434.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994).

Ecological models of human development. *Readings on the Development of Children*, 2, 37-43.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005).

Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development. Sage.

Corcoran, L., Guckin, C. M., & Prentice, G. (2015).

Cyberbullying or cyber aggression?: A review of existing definitions of cyber-based peer-to-peer aggression. *Societies*, 5(2), 245-255.

Crothers, L. M. & Levinson, E. M. (2004).

Assessment of Bullying: A Review of Methods and Instruments. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 82(4), 496–503.

Dempsey, A. G., Sulkowski, M. L., Nichols, R. & Storch, E. A. (2009).

Differences between peer victimization in cyber and physical settings and associated psychosocial adjustment in early adolescence. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(10), 962–972.

Dooley, J. J., Pyżalski, J. & Cross, D. (2009).

Cyberbullying Versus Face-to-Face Bullying. *Zeitschrift Für Psychologie/Journal of Psychology*, 217(4), 182–188.

Gámez-Guadix, M., Orue, I., Smith, P. K. & Calvete, E. (2013).

Longitudinal and reciprocal relations of cyberbullying with depression, substance use, and problematic internet use among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(4), 446–452.

Gini, G. & Pozzoli, T. (2013).

Bullied children and psychosomatic problems: a meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*, 132(4), 720–729.

Grigg, D. W. (2010).

Cyber-Aggression: Definition and Concept of Cyberbullying. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20(02), 143–156.

Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2007).

Offline consequences of online victimization: School violence and delinquency. *Journal of School Violence*, 6(3), 89–112.

Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2009).

Cyberbullying Research Summary: Emotional and Psychological Consequences. Cyberbullying Research Center. Retrieved from http://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying_emotional_consequences.pdf

Johnson, G. M. (2010).

Young children's Internet use at home and school: Patterns and profiles. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 8(3), 282–293.

Jose, P. E., Kljakovic, M., Scheib, E. & Notter, O. (2012).

The joint development of traditional bullying and victimization with cyber bullying and victimization in adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 22(2), 301–309.

Juvonen, J. & Gross, E. F. (2008).

Extending the School Grounds?—Bullying Experiences in Cyberspace. *Journal of School Health*, 78(9), 496–505.

Kim, Y. S. & Leventhal, B. (2008).

Bullying and suicide. A review. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 20(2), 133–154.

Kochenderfer-Ladd, B. & Skinner, K. (2002).

Children's coping strategies: moderators of the effects of peer victimization? *Developmental Psychology*, 38(2), 267–278.

Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N. & Lattanner, M. R. (2014).

Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073.

Kowalski, R. M. & Limber, S. P. (2013).

Psychological, Physical, and Academic Correlates of Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(1, Supplement), S13–S20.

Menesini, E., Nocentini, A., Palladino, B. E., Frisén, A., Berne, S., Ortega-Ruiz, R., Calmaestra, J., Scheithauer, H., Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Luik, P., Naruskov, K., Blaya, C., Berthaud, J. & Smith, P. K. (2012).

Cyberbullying definition among adolescents: a comparison across six European countries. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, 15(9), 455–463.

Olweus, D. (1993).

Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Wiley.

Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. (2006).

Bullies Move Beyond the Schoolyard: A Preliminary Look at Cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4(2), 148–169.

Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. (2010).

Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem. *Journal of School Health*, 80(12), 614–621.

Raskauskas, J. & Stoltz, A. D. (2007).

Involvement in traditional and electronic bullying among adolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(3), 564–575.

Schneider, S. K., O'Donnell, L., Stueve, A. & Coulter, R. W. S. (2012).
Cyberbullying, School Bullying, and Psychological Distress: A Regional Census of High School Students. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(1), 171–177.

Slonje, R. & Smith, P. K. (2008).
Cyberbullying: Another main type of bullying? *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 147–154.

Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., & Tippett, N. (2006).
An investigation into cyberbullying, its forms, awareness and impact, and the relationship between age and gender in cyberbullying. Research Brief No. RBX03-06. London: DfES.

Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S. & Tippett, N. (2008).
Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(4), 376–385.

Smith, P. K. (2015).
The nature of cyberbullying and what we can do about it. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 15(3), 176–184.

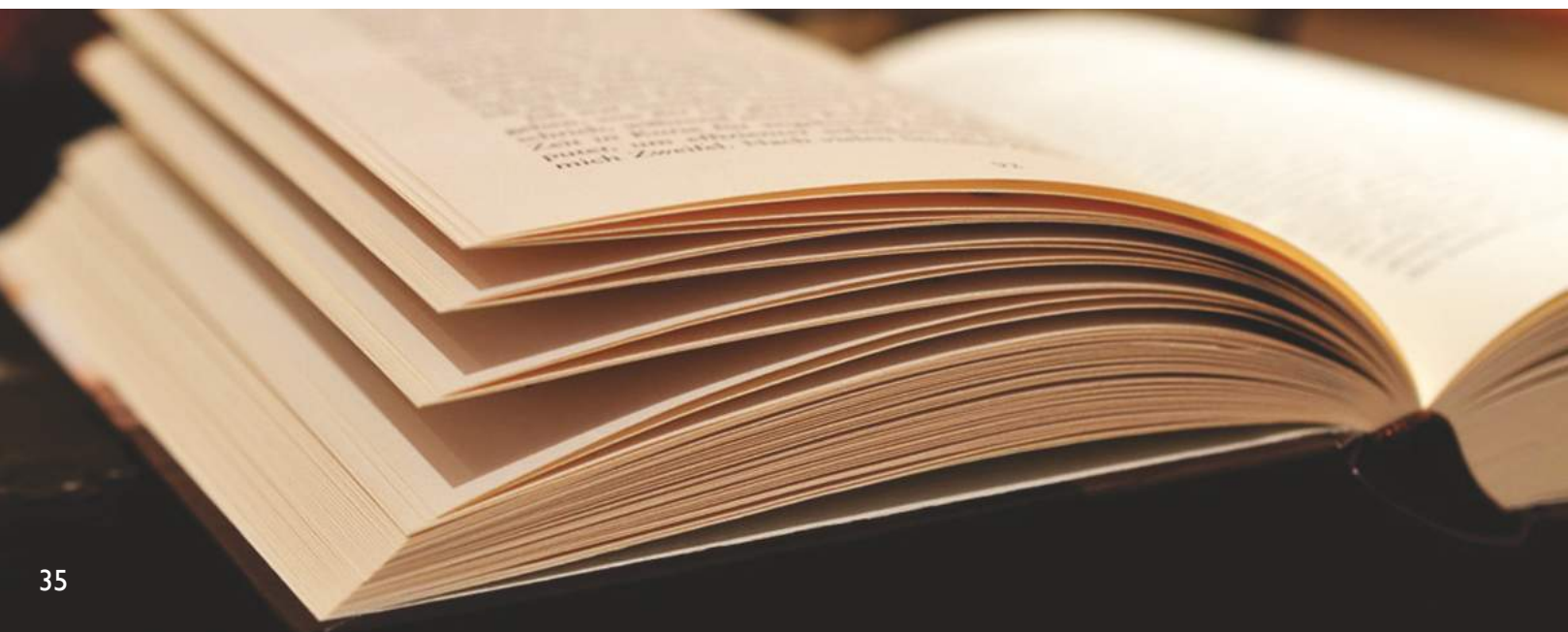
Sourander, A., Brunstein Klomek, A., Ikonen, M., Lindroos, J., Luntamo, T., Koskelainen, M., Ristkari, T. & Helenius, H. (2010).
Psychosocial risk factors associated with cyberbullying among adolescents: A population-based study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 67(7), 720–728.

Tarapdar, S., Kellett, M. & People, Y. (2013).
Cyberbullying: insights and age-comparison indicators from a youth-led study in England. *Child Indicators Research*, 6(3), 461–477.

Tokunaga, R. S. (2010).
Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(3), 277–287.

Tsitsika, A., Janikian, M., Wójcik, S., Makaruk, K., Tzavela, E., Tzavara, C., Greydanus, D., Merrick, J. & Richardson, C. (2015).
Cyberbullying victimisation prevalence and associations with internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents in six European countries. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 51, 1–17.

Willard, N. E. (2007).
Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats, and Distress. Research Press.





6.2 Useful Links

The following links are to organisations, charities and networks working in the area of bullying and cyberbullying prevention. They provide useful information, advice and support relating to these issues that are useful to adolescents, parents and teachers.

Antibullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Antibullying Pro Support Centre: www.antibullyingpro.com

Bullies Out: www.bulliesout.com

Bullying UK: www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying

Childline: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/online-bullying

Child Net: www.childnet.com

The Cybersmile Foundation: www.cybersmile.org

Department for Education: Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

Ditch the Label: www.ditchthelabel.org

End Bullying: www.endbullying.org.uk

Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org

Kidscape: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

National Bullying Helpline: www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

National Professional Quality for Headship (NPQH), Leadership challenges: Cyberbullying
<https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/cm-mc-les-op-gardner.pdf>

NHS: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Bullying/Pages/Antibullyinghelp.aspx

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

Respect Me: www.respectme.org.uk

Stand Up To Bullying: www.standuptobullying.co.uk

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

UK Safe Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/tags/cyberbullying

Wise Kids: www.wisekids.org.uk/cyberbullying.htm

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk



Dr. Maša Popovac, CPsychol
Lecturer in Psychology, University of Buckingham
Hunter Street, Buckingham, MK18 1EG

Website: www.buckingham.ac.uk/cyberbullying
Email: masa.popovac@buckingham.ac.uk
Twitter: @Masa_Pop_

Design by Streetlight Media