



**WE LISTEN, WE SUPPORT,
WE TAKE ACTION**
for Scotland's vulnerable
children and families

Briefing from CHILDREN 1ST Cyber bullying

At CHILDREN 1ST, we listen, we support and we take action to secure a brighter future for Scotland's vulnerable children. Our work is built on over 125 years experience as the RSSPCC. By working together with, and listening to children, young people, their families and communities, and by influencing public policy and opinion; we help to change the lives of vulnerable children and young people for the better. We work to safeguard children and young people, to support them within their families and to help them to recover from abuse, neglect and violence. Our 46 local services and four national services are child centred. The children, young people and families we support are key partners in all aspects of our work. We work in partnership with other organisations, particularly RespectMe, and are pleased to support its vital work on tackling this issue.

CHILDREN 1ST welcomes this debate and the opportunity to add our views and experience to it. We know from listening to children and young people in CHILDREN 1ST services that cyber bullying can be a devastating experience. It can spread rapidly and uncontrollably and can feel inescapable to those who experience it as it can happen at home, which should be a place where children and young people feel safe. One of the key issues in relation to cyber bullying is that it follows children wherever they are.

Evidence

- In a ParentLine survey, 18.9% parents acknowledged that their child had suffered from some form of cyber bullying either through social networking sites or via nasty text messagesⁱ.
- In CHILDREN 1ST's online survey 79% respondents considered cyber bullying an issue and 29% of the respondents' children had suffered from cyber bullyingⁱⁱ.
- In a survey of almost 2,500 young people, Beatbullying 50% respondents said they'd been cyber bullied; 29% told no-one about being cyber bullied; 73% said they knew who was sending them bullying messages and 11% admitted to being a cyber bully.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recommendations

CHILDREN 1ST believes that it is everybody's responsibility to protect children. We want people not to feel afraid to act when they have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, but to feel confident about speaking out. By speaking out

people can help make a real difference and help keep Scotland's children safe. We can all do our bit to tackle cyber bullying.

- Policy makers and practitioners must ensure that anti bullying strategies also focus on cyber bullying.
- Professionals working with children need to feel confident and competent that they can recognise and understand the issues connected with cyber bullying.
- Cyber bullying and its impacts should form part of specific anti bullying policies within schools.
- Children should be taught about good cyber behaviour and the importance of maintaining healthy social relationships online.
- Parents need to know where they can access support to recognise and identify the signs that their child is bullying or being bullied and know what to do to support their child.
- We would encourage parents and carers to follow our Twelve Top Tips which can help them protect children they know:
<http://www.children1st.org.uk/news/487/twelve-top-tips>
- It's crucial that children and young people can talk to someone. Children can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. Anyone who is worried about a child can call ParentLine Scotland, free, on 08000 28 22 33 or email parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk for confidential advice.

ⁱ CHILDREN 1ST ParentLine survey 6th June 2010 – 6th July 2010

ⁱⁱ CHILDREN 1ST online survey 6th June 2010 – 6th July 2010

ⁱⁱⁱ www.cybermentors.org.uk, how many people are affected by bullying?

ParentLine Scotland is a free and confidential helpline, open seven days a week, from 9am to 10pm weekdays and from 12 noon to 8pm at weekends. Anyone who has a concern about a child can call on 08000 28 22 33 or email at parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk.

For more information about CHILDREN 1ST, contact the policy team at policy@children1st.org.uk or on 0131 446 2300