# St. Mary's Online Safety Newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of the St. Mary's Online Safety Newsletter, a document designed to keep you informed on the latest trends so that we can do a better job of keeping children safe online.

Cyberbullying - what is it?

While the emotional aspects of bullying continue to be devastating, the internet and social media have changed the way children experience bullying. **Cyberbullying, simply put is bullying that happens online** through social, gaming or instant messaging platforms.

What are the risks?

Cyberbullying is when someone bullies others using electronic means, this might involve social media and messaging services on the internet, accessed on a mobile phone, tablet or gaming platform. The behaviour is **usually repeated** and at times can be as subtle as leaving someone out of a group chat or cropping them out of a picture.
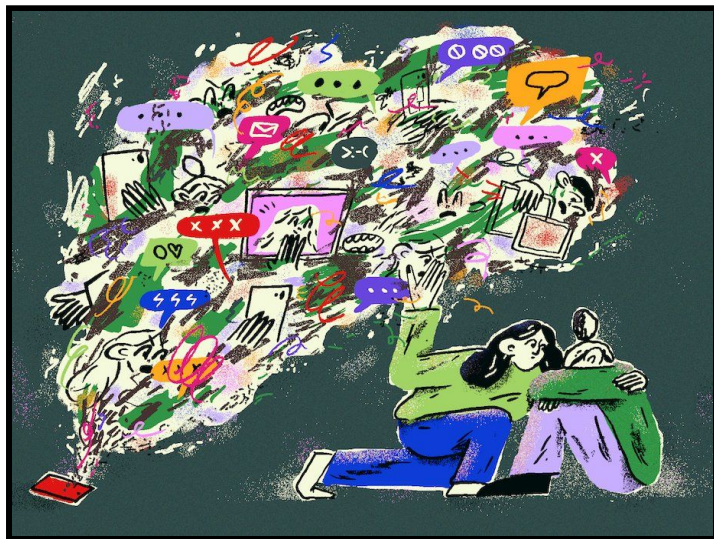
It's on the rise - one in five children claim to have experienced cyberbullying in some form. **The internet never sleeps** - cyberbullying can reach children at any time and anywhere. **It's easy to do** - even children who have never been involved in bullying can post or share something without thinking. **It can be anonymous** - although it is easy to gather evidence, it's much harder to figure out who is behind it.

One of the biggest differences between cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying is that **it can be hard to get away from**. Young people could be bullied anywhere, anytime – even when they're at home. It can reach a vast audience in a matter of seconds and has the potential to draw in large numbers of people. It takes 'repetition' to a different level, with hurtful comments and images being shared multiple times and it has the potential to impact at any time of day or night. Cyberbullying can offer a degree of **anonymity** to the perpetrator - there are very few children that have not been impacted in some way.

Cyberbullying terms

You'll hear various different words used in the context of cyberbullying, so it helps to know what each of these means.

Catfishing - stealing someone's profile or setting up fake profiles to lure people into starting online relationships.

Exclusion - deliberately excluding someone from online conversations, games and activities.

Roasting - ganging up on an individual online and sending offensive abuse until the victim is seen to 'crack'.

Trolling - deliberately posting provocative and insulting messages about sensitive subjects.

How can we manage these risks?

The best way to keep your child safe online is to **take an active interest** right from the start. They need your love and protection online as much as they do in the real world. What your child is exposed to will depend on how they're using the internet – social network users are more likely to experience cyberbullying, see inappropriate images, or have contact with strangers.

Have meaningful online safety conversations. The earlier you can talk to your child about making positive choices online, the better. Who do they want to be online? The choices we make online say something about who we are. Talk to your child about how the things they do online paint a picture of themselves, so they shouldn't post things without thinking about it. How much should they share about themselves? Talk to your child about the risks of sharing, identifying where they live or go to school, and what people online might do with that information. How much time should they spend online? Talk about the possible impact of spending too much time online.

Setting controls and privacy settings

As a parent you have some decisions to make about how you want your child to engage online and on social media and what measures you want to put in place to help protect them.

Whatever device you choose, **there are free controls you can use to stop your child from purchasing and using certain apps, seeing certain content, or limiting what they can share with others**, like their location for example. Our set up safe how to guides to set parental controls to cover the most popular range of devices and apps and platforms children use. From YouTube Kids to streaming services like Netflix, you'll find quick and easy steps to set up the right controls to create a safe place for your child to explore.

You will probably use social networks yourself, but you might want to know about new ones that your child is using or wants to use. **Use them yourself and set up your own account so you can experience what your child might see**. Spend time together looking at the privacy settings. It's always best to assume that default settings are public and should be changed accordingly.

If you are concerned about cyberbullying, or any other online safety matter, be sure to get in touch, or visit net-aware.org.uk.

NSPCC
Net Aware)))