SAFER SCHOOLS

WHAT ARE YOUR

WORDS WORTH?

AN ACTIVITY PACK FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS ABOUT THE POWER OF ONLINE COMMENTS

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An Activity Pack About the Power of Online Comments

When you think of a bully what sort of person do you think of? Maybe someone physically tough who picks on their victims every single day and never leaves them alone? Just like with most things, bullies come in all shapes and sizes. This is especially true with online bullying where it's easy for a bully to be anonymous!

What do you consider to be online bullying (sometimes referred to as cyberbullying)? Write some examples in the boxes below:

The National Bullying Helpline defines cyberbullying as bullying and harassment using technology. This includes trolling, mobbing, stalking, grooming, or any form of abuse online.

It's easy to think online bullying isn't as hurtful as **'real life'** bullying but it is just as **'real'** for the victims and can cause them a lot of hurt and emotional harm. Victims of bullying often report feeling **anxious, isolated, and depressed**. Imagine if every time you used your phone to chat to friends or logged on to play your favourite game, you instead had to read or hear mean and nasty comments. With how much time we all spend online, it would be hard to feel like there's a safe place to turn to!

Although bullying is usually a type of abuse that the victim experiences repeatedly, in this activity pack we're going to consider **how our own words online can make others feel.**

Sometimes in a moment of anger, frustration, jealousy, or just because it seems funny, we might make a comment online without really thinking about we're saying. We don't really consider how it might make the other person feel. We might not even realise that what we're doing counts as bullying!

Maybe you've had your own experiences of being bullied. If so, we've lots of support and advice for you on the last page.
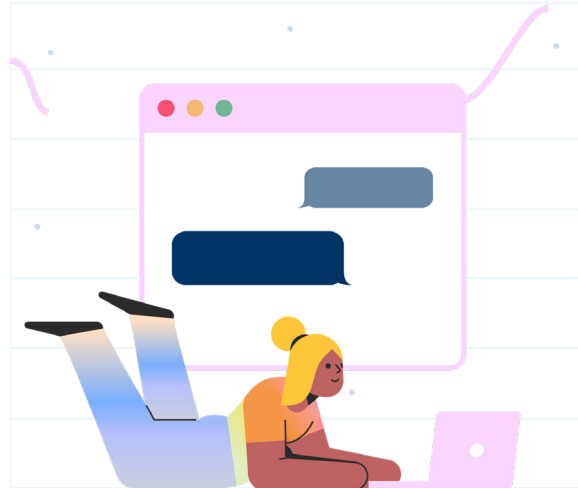
It's really important to realise:

Just One Comment Counts

Even if you're just making a one-off offensive comment to be funny or you think the person won't care or notice what you say, **it is still very likely to be hurtful to the person you've said it to.**

You might think people with lots of followers, like an Influencer, won't be hurt by mean comments. We also sometimes think that if something is done anonymously it won't mean as much. *However, it doesn't matter who it is you say it to or how it's done.*

Online Bullying Hurts Everyone

You might even forget you've said something, but that person could still be thinking about it for hours or days later - sometimes even longer than that!

Activity: Rate Your Words

It helps if we think of our words like a point system, with comments being worth more or less points depending on if they're positive or negative.

For example, calling someone a really offensive term is worth -10 points. Saying something nice in the comments about your friend's latest Instagram post would be worth +10 points.

Think about the last five comments you've made online, whether that's a comment you've made on social media, talking to a friend on WhatsApp or Messenger, or through voice chat on a game. You don't have to share the content of the comments.

How do you rate each one from a scale of -10 to +10?

Comment one score:

Comment two score:

Comment three score:

Comment four score:

Comment five score:

Now add up your total. How did you score overall?

Are you happy with this score or do you think you could do better?

If you wrote comments that were quite negative, was there a reason you did? Were you feeling angry, upset, or in a bad mood?

Activity: Rate Your Words

For the same five comments, write down how you think they made the other person feel.

Comment one score:

Comment two score:

Comment three score:

Comment four score:

Comment five score:

For the next five comments you make, try and beat your score from earlier!

Of course, all games with points usually result in winning the game or getting ahead in some way. So what do you win with this game?
Take a look at some of our prize suggestions:

Feeling proud of yourself

Improved confidence

Developing closer or new friendships

Making someone smile

#PositivePosts

In this activity we're going to think about how we spread around some positivity! The world has been a difficult place to live in for the last few years so we could all do with some more positive vibes.

First, let's think about the sort of online spaces you use. Are you a social media star or a gaming guru? Do you and your friends spend time playing games while chatting on headsets together? Or do you prefer browsing through funny videos on TikTok or sharing photos of your latest outfit? Or maybe you enjoy all of these things!

Keeping in mind how you use the internet, write down some of the ways you most often communicate with others.

For example, if you watch a lot of YouTube, you may write comments underneath someone's video.

Site name, App or Game	How I Use It to Interact
Example: Instagram	*Leaving reactions to videos*

Now we're going to think about how we use those same places and methods of chatting to spread some positivity! **Using the same examples above, what sort of positive comments could you make?**

For example, if you follow friends on Instagram who love taking and sharing photographs, what sort of positive comments could you write? If you're in a group of gamers, what could you say or do to make them laugh or encourage them?

Site name, App or Game	Positive Ways I Could Interact
Example: Instagram	*Leaving a complimentary comment on a photograph*

Finally, we're going to challenge you to put your ideas into action! It's time to spread some positivity online and you can be a part of it.

On your next 10 posts on social media or while playing games, write or say something positive and add the hashtag #PositivePosts. If you're struggling to think about what to say, remember the aim is to make the other person or people smile!

#PositivePosts

Don't forget to tag your posts! #PositivePosts

# Further Support and Resources

Helpline numbers and sites

NSPCC – Bullying and Cyberbullying

Internet Matters – Cyberbullying

Childline

How to Deal with Cyberbullying

Visit our **Safety Centre** to learn how to block, report, configure your safety and privacy settings on a range of different social media apps & platforms.

Online Safety Centre

⚙ Settings

⊘ Block

! Report
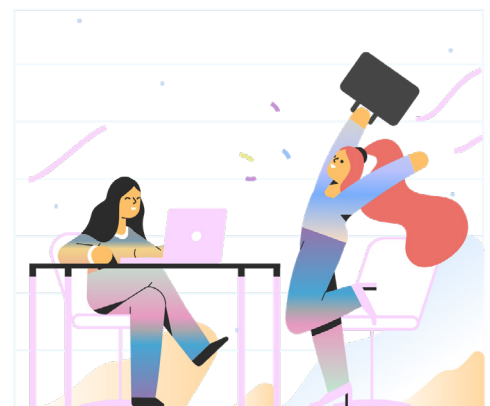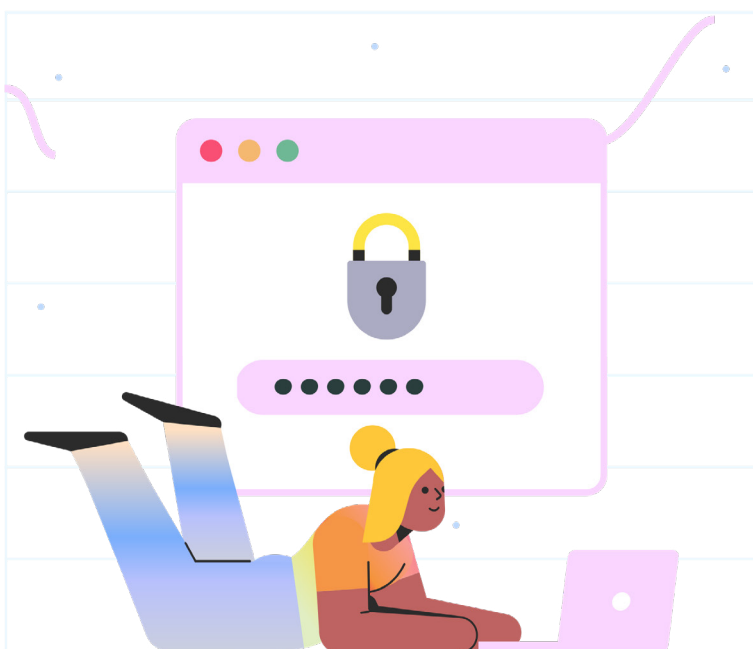
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For more information...

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