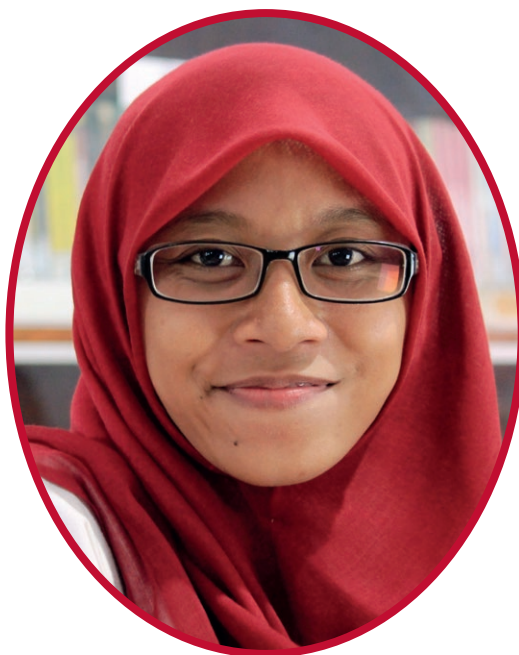


Amal's Story

Amal started to receive hurtful text messages on her phone. They were coming from a number she didn't recognise. She later found out it was a girl in her year at school. In the beginning, she ignored them and thought they would stop. Unfortunately, they didn't. More people joined in with the bullying behaviours. The messages came more often. At its worst, Amal was receiving abusive and threatening messages at all times of the day and night. She felt like she had no escape. She felt frightened, worried and very alone. She was so worried that she became physically ill and refused to go to school. She missed so much school that she got incredibly behind with her work. This made her feel even worse. She felt trapped. In the end, Amal decided that this couldn't continue and she took the very brave step to tell her Auntie about what had been happening to her. She hadn't said anything before because the bullies had made her feel like it was all her fault that it was happening and they had told her that no one would listen to her if she told. However, her Auntie did listen. She reassured Amal that it was not her fault and that she had become a victim of cyberbullying. She went with Amal to report it to the school. Amal showed her teacher all the messages she had received. Her teacher took it very seriously and dealt with it immediately. The pupils who had been sending the messages were excluded from school for a while and upon their return, they worked with school staff to learn about why bullying behaviours are unacceptable. Amal now works with the school and other pupils to inform others about cyberbullying and how to get help.

Amal says...

'If you are being bullied through your phone, remember it is not your fault and there are people who can help make it stop. Tell someone, you are not alone. To the people who send abusive text messages – what you are doing is wrong and can have serious consequences for your victim and yourself. Please think twice before you press send.'



Fredrika's Story

Fredrika first became aware something was wrong when she realised people were laughing at her at school but she had no idea why. That night she logged on to her social media page and, to her horror, saw pictures of herself which had been edited with awful comments about her appearance. Fredrika was devastated. People were liking and commenting on them; Fredrika didn't understand why she was being targeted. This continued for several weeks. Fredrika couldn't sleep or eat and felt sad all of the time, so much so it made her ill. Eventually, Fredrika told her parents who took a screen shot of all the pictures and messages. They then helped her to block the people carrying out the cyberbullying and report them to the social media site. The social media site closed down the accounts of those who were carrying out the cyberbullying behaviours and they had to also face consequences at school and at home for their behaviour. Fredrika is rebuilding her confidence slowly, although she still suffers with anxiety and low self-esteem. She struggles to make friends and trust people but is determined to do all she can to live as normal a life as possible.

Fredrika's Story...

'What happened to me will stay with me forever. I just wish the people who decided to make me a target of cyberbullying had never done it; it has changed my life. Please think twice before posting, liking or commenting on hurtful posts. Your actions have long-lasting effects.'



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Waiu's Story

Waiu joined his school from abroad. Most of the children welcomed him and really looked out for him; he was so grateful. Unfortunately, a few children decided to make him a target because he spoke differently and looked different to them. They created a group chat all about him and then posted all of the awful things people were saying about him on his social media account. This changed his experience of his new school completely. He felt sad and angry about how he was being treated. Due to how sad he was feeling inside, he started to behave in an aggressive way towards others. He got in a lot of trouble. Eventually, he told a teacher, who was dealing with an incident in which he had damaged school property, all about what was happening to him. The teacher was very helpful and supportive and the school took immediate action. They asked for evidence of all the cyberbullying and, as it was targeting Waiu because of his race, they reported it to the police as well as the children's families. The children were very sorry about their behaviour and said they were 'only having a laugh'. They soon understood that teasing and bullying someone online because they are a different race is wrong and were shocked to learn that the police see this as a 'hate crime'. Waiu moved on from the experience and continued to spend time with the people who had shown him kindness and liked him just the way he was. He developed a love of basketball and went on to represent the school in lots of tournaments.

Waiu says...

'Think before you act. Making fun of someone and targeting them because you think they are different is unacceptable. It is not having fun or having a laugh – it is hurtful and wrong. Be someone who is kind and who makes a positive difference in people's lives.'



Isabelle's Story

Isabelle had always wanted to be a journalist. She loved reading, writing and reporting! So, she set up a blog to practise her writing and reporting skills. Most of the people at school were supportive and proud of what Isabelle was doing and made an effort to congratulate her. However, a group of children decided that they would troll Isabelle's blog site. They posted hurtful and aggressive messages in response to her writing. Isabelle tried blocking them but the trolling continued. The cyberbullying took something that was a passion for Isabelle and made it into a nightmare. Isabelle stopped writing and reporting and decided she no longer wanted to be a journalist. Isabelle shared what was happening with her best friend. She advised Isabelle to talk to an adult she trusted to tell them what was happening and ask for help. Isabelle did this and they helped her report the trolls to the blog site. They were traced and stopped. Isabelle is beginning to write again but still feels frightened about sharing her work with others.

Isabelle says...

'Be happy for other people. Your nasty online comments can ruin a life dream that someone has. Your actions have consequences.'

Be kind online!



Kobi's Story

Kobi loved online gaming. He loved meeting with his friends to compete in different tasks and challenges. He started noticing he was being left out and excluded from gaming meets and not being invited to join in. He didn't understand why. He asked the group and that was when the messages started. Kobi was being called unkind names and some members of the group were saying bad things were going to happen to him; they were threatening him. Kobi became very frightened and started not wanting to leave the house. He became very sad and lonely. He found it difficult to join in with family and friends because of the worries in his head. His big brother noticed he wasn't himself and so asked him if he was OK. Kobi normally said he was 'fine' but this time he decided to be completely honest and tell his brother about all that was happening. His brother told their parents and they all promised to help Kobi deal with his cyberbullying experience. They did and now Kobi is re-building his confidence, helping others who experience cyberbullying. Although he still loves online gaming, he makes sure he spends time with people who treat him with kindness and respect and walks away from anyone who doesn't.

Kobi says...

'Everyone has the right to live a safe and happy life, to spend their free time doing things they love without being bullied. It is never OK to call people names in online games. If it happens to you, report it and ask for help.'



Ryan's Story

Ryan was part of a group chat with quite a few people from his school. It started out fine but then some children from older year groups joined. They started sharing things that were not appropriate and then daring Ryan and some of his friends to do things they shouldn't. They said that if they didn't, they would send embarrassing pictures of them to the group. Ryan felt so worried and frightened. He didn't know what to do. He knew what he was being asked to do was wrong but he didn't want the pictures to be made and sent. He did the first thing they asked and he felt terrible about it but hoped it would stop. It didn't, it got worse. Ryan spoke to a cousin about what was happening. His cousin told him to tell his mum. Ryan said he couldn't as he was worried about getting into trouble. So, his cousin told him to ring ChildLine on 0800 1111. Ryan did this and they helped him understand the situation and to talk to his mum. She was great and really helped. She helped him to say no to the bullying behaviours and report the older children to the school. The bullying stopped.

Ryan says...

'It is OK to say no – in fact, it is really brave! If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. It is important to tell someone you trust and ask for help. Cyberbullying shouldn't be happening and there are things we can do to help it stop.'



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Aazar's Story

Aazar enjoyed chatting to his friends online using social media sites and he was very aware about how to use these sites safely and responsibly. He was always kind to others online and knew he had to speak out if he saw anything that worried him. However, he noticed that more and more of his friends weren't chatting to him online and that this was happening in school too. Aazar was very confused and became more and more isolated. One day, he discovered that someone was spreading lies and rumours about him and his family online and that this had been happening for quite a while. Aazar felt so alone and confused and the lies led to very unkind treatment. He didn't know what to do. However, someone at his school saw what was happening and decided to tell a teacher. Aazar was so grateful to this person for speaking out. It helped the cyberbullying stop and it meant he was able to speak the truth. The people responsible had to face the consequences of their actions.

Aazar says...

'Use online communication and social media sites for good. Be honest and truthful. Online lies and rumours can spiral out of control and are very hard to get away from. Use your words and actions to help and not harm'.



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