



FACT SHEET 3

TYPES OF BULLYING

Overt bullying

Overt bullying (sometimes referred to as face-to-face or direct bullying) involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or overt verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting.

Covert bullying

Covert bullying (sometimes referred to as indirect bullying) is a subtle type of non-physical bullying which isn't easily seen by others and is conducted out of sight, and therefore often unacknowledged by teachers.

Covert bullying behaviours mostly inflict harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem.

Covert bullying can include repeatedly:

- using hand gestures and weird or threatening looks
- whispering, excluding, turning your back on a person
- blackmailing, spreading rumours, threatening, stealing friends
- breaking secrets, gossiping, criticising clothes and personalities.

The definitions above contain the key characteristics and have been taken from the Safe Schools Hub which can be accessed at: <http://www.safeschoolshub.edu.au/home> and the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study May 2009, Edith Cowan University which can be accessed at http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/australian_covert_bullying_prevalence_study_executive_summary.pdf



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be conducted in many ways, using different media including:

- the sending of abusive texts or emails
- taking and sharing unflattering or private images, including naked or sexual images
- posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites
- excluding individuals from online chats or other communication
- assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

Like other forms of bullying such as verbal abuse, social exclusion and physical aggression, cyberbullying has the potential to result in the target of bullying developing social, psychological and educational issues.

While cyberbullying is similar to real life bullying it also differs in the following ways:

- it can be difficult to escape and invasive—it can occur 24/7 and a person can be targeted while at home
- it can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once
- it can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the victim, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

The definitions for cyberbullying contain the key characteristics and have been taken from the Australian Communications and Media Authority Cybersmart website which can be accessed at:
<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Home/Schools/Cyber%20issues/Cyberbullying.aspx>