Latest advice from the Department of Education for parents and carers on cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take place through any type of technology, e.g. social media sites, gaming sites, mobile phones and tablets. The effects can be devastating.

Most children have recently been involved in some form of cyberbullying either as a victim, perpetrator or bystander. Often it will involve a group of young people rather than just individuals.

Parents need to lead by example and think before they post. Conversations at the school gates can now be conducted online, with a much larger audience, and easily shared with students. Conducting online conversations can often lead to a false sense of security and many people reveal or say things which they would not say face to face. Comments can also be taken out of context.

Advice for young people and children:

- Make sure you check your privacy settings regularly
- Be careful what you post online. Once a photo is shared online it stays there forever
- Do not reply to offensive messages
- Save the evidence
- Most social media sites have a button for reporting bullying
- Learn how to block contacts

If you suspect your child is being bullied offer practical as well as emotional support. Make sure you talk to a teacher and inform the school.

You can get more information and support from the following websites:

- Childline – Building confidence after online bullying
  http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/Building-confidence-after-online-bullying.aspx
- Facebook – Empowering Parents and Families
  https://www.facebook.com/ParentingAdvice
- Anti-Bullying Alliance – advice and support
  http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/parents-carers.aspx
- The Parent Zone
  http://www.theparentzone.co.uk/parent/information/digital_parenting