

# Guidance for parents/carers

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# blurred lives PROJECT

A Cross-National, Co-Participatory Exploration Of Cyberbullying,  
Young People And Socio-Economic Disadvantage.



## Intellectual Output 3

# Guidance for Parents/Carers



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## *A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE BLURRED LIVES PROJECT*

Welcome to this resource designed for pupils by young people across Europe as part of the Blurred Lives Project - a cross-national, co-participatory exploration of cyberbullying, young people and socio-economic disadvantage. The Blurred Lives Project focused on the online experiences of 14-16-year olds in schools in disadvantaged urban areas in Northern Ireland, England, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands and aims to facilitate pupil voice through the creation of resources for teachers, pupils, parents and social networking providers.

The Blurred Lives Project is the first project in Europe to use a co-participatory approach and to initiate pupil-led development of resources based on what these pupils experience, how they define cyberbullying, and what they think interventions should look like.

In the first phase of the project an online survey was completed by around 500 pupils in 5+ schools in each country and explored pupils' online access and negative experiences. The second phase aimed to provide up-to-date resources for teachers, pupils and parents/carers, and make important recommendations to Social Networking Providers, building on ideas from the pupils themselves. This was done through a combination of Sequential Focus Groups, and Quality Circles, carried out intensively with two classes of 14-16-year-old pupils in each country (237 pupils in total).

The full range of original resources are available on the [Blurred Lives Project website](https://www.ou.nl/web/blurred-lives/project) \* and on the [Erasmus+ Project Results Platform](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/) °.

\* <https://www.ou.nl/web/blurred-lives/project>

° <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>



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## *OVERVIEW OF PARENT/CARER RESOURCES DEVELOPED BY PUPILS ON THE BLURRED LIVES PROJECT*

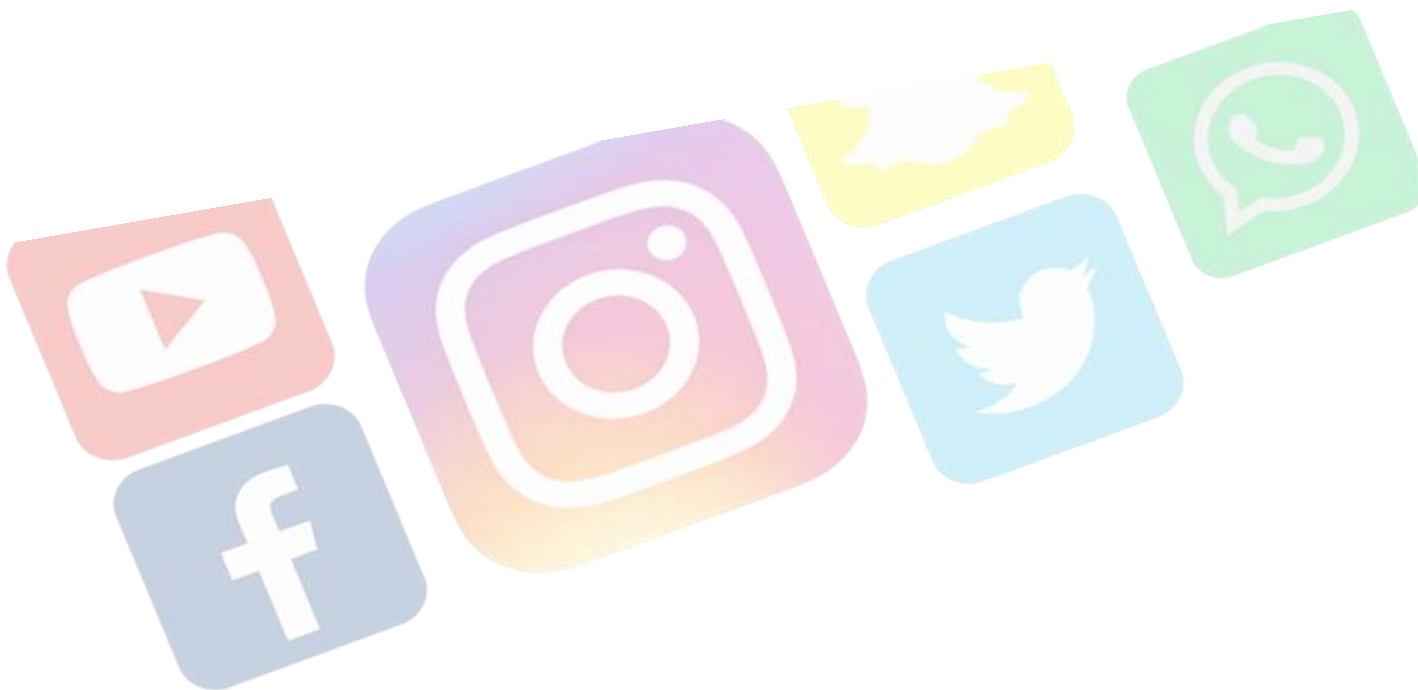
The Blurred Lives Project created a wealth of authentic resources for parents/carers by pupils from the five participating countries to help offer understanding of cyberbullying, and how to support a young person who may be experiencing this increasingly concerning issue. This resource provides concise, accessible, highly visual guidance for busy parents/carers on the challenging subject of cyberbullying.

Despite the different languages and cultures of the pupil participants, there are clear and similar themes running through the work produced.

‘Pupil voice’ was truly facilitated and there was a strong and passionate request by pupils for their parents/carers to talk with them more, have open conversations and ask questions on a daily basis about, ‘how they are’: simple ideas and suggestions in theory, but probably the hardest to achieve in practice.

The pupils presented their messages using a variety of formats and created a flip-card game, some posters and leaflets, a newsletter, an instructional video, an advert and a foldable flyer.

Examples of these are presented below with reflections and guidance on how they should be used.



## **CENTRAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

### **Parents/carers to talk to their child**

A key guideline emerging from the work with the pupils is for parents/carers to talk with their child about their online lives and for the conversations to occur frequently. Young people request honesty and openness, and this will assist nurturing the dialogue; the small questions must be asked daily such as, 'how was your day?'

### **Parents/carers to educate themselves about online communication**

Many of the pupils in the project felt that parents/carers need to educate themselves and their children about online safety, including the introduction of ground rules about appropriate and inappropriate content, privacy settings and consequences of online actions

### **Parents/carers to know how to behave if a problem arises**

The pupils felt that parents/carers should listen to them if a problem arises rather than be shouted at and no immediate action being taken. They ask for parents/carers to take their problems seriously and be involved and present in their lives.

### **Parents/carers to not prohibit Internet use**

There was a strong feeling that stopping Internet and social media use was an ineffective intervention although one that is commonly attempted by parents/carers.

### **Parents/carers to set a good digital example**

Parents/carers must reflect on their own digital behaviours, making sure that they themselves are following the rules vocalised to their children.

### **Parents/carers need to support their children**

The pupils felt that parents/carers need to support their child and show kindness at all times; empathy rather than apathy.

### **Parents/carers to watch out for warning signs of their child being cyberbullied**

The pupils asked parents/carers to keep a watchful eye on their child so that early warning signs of being cyberbullied may be identified and acted upon immediately.

### **Parents/carers to find a solution together**

The pupils would like to find a solution with their parents/carers rather than told what to do or have the problem solved without their involvement.

## ***GUIDANCE ON HOW TO USE THE RESOURCES***

### ***EXAMPLE 1: FLYER FOR PARENTS/CARERS (GERMANY)***

#### *Aims and overview*

Supported by the research team at Freie Universität, Berlin, pupils from one of their participating schools created a foldable flyer. The resource supports parents/carers through five “How to respond” steps when they suspect their child may be a victim of cyberbullying.

The resource captures pupil voice perfectly, asking parents/carers to be more involved in their lives. The information provided may sound obvious and simple, but the pupils must feel that basic dialogue is missing at the moment and this is a reminder of how to communicate with each other. Pupils are saying that they cannot stop cyberbullying on their own, they need their families, and this is summed up succinctly at the end of Step 1 where it appears in bold, capital letters: “We recommend to talk to your child!”

#### *Reflections/questions*

Parents/carers need to firstly, question their current input in helping their child navigate the digital world and secondly, whether they are creating time and space to observe changes in behaviour. Examples of questions- ‘what do I do to help my child understand the internet?’, ‘does my child know that I am here for them?’, ‘do I spare the time to answer their questions about the internet?’, ‘does my child feel alone when navigating the internet or do we work as a team?’

### ***EXAMPLE 2: NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS (ENGLAND)***

#### *Aims and overview*

A newsletter was created by pupils from a school in London, assisted by a number of academics from Goldsmiths College, University of London. This is a thought-provoking resource designed for fast-paced living; it is short in content, universally comprehensible and not text-heavy. However, the power provided through the hand-drawn images and the hand-written message at the bottom, may cause any parent/carer to stop and think about their child.

#### *Reflections/questions*

Parents/carers may ask themselves what type of relationship they have and if they make time in their busy schedule for the small questions. Examples of questions - ‘how was your day?’, ‘how was school?’, ‘how are you feeling at the moment?’.

## ***GUIDANCE ON HOW TO USE THE RESOURCES***

### ***EXAMPLE 3: POSTERS FOR PARENTS/CARERS (ITALY)***

#### *Aims and overview*

A series of posters was created by pupils from a vocational school in Bologna, assisted by a number of academics from the University of Bologna.

Altogether, the posters are intended for parents / carers to help their children with cyberbullying. In general, the students who have produced this resource highlighted the importance of parental monitoring and of the dimension of trust in the parent-child relationship. At the same time, they emphasize adolescents' need for autonomy, and therefore their desire to have present, but not intrusive or hyper-controlling, parents.

#### *Reflections/questions*

The resource reflects the potentially difficult position that parent/carers find themselves in with their children; the desire for a closer connection but at the same time, not to appear too controlling or aggressive. Parent/carers should question what kind of connection they should pursue in order to help their kids with these matters. Current resources on the Internet, rarely show this conflict of interests so clearly.

### ***EXAMPLE 4: UNDERSTANDING CYBERSAFETY (NORTHERN IRELAND)***

#### *Aims and overview*

One of the resources created by pupils from a school in Northern Ireland, supported by academics at Stranmillis University College, was a leaflet. Its purpose was to clearly and precisely help parent/carers increase their understanding of cyberbullying, including the reasons around, 'why do teenagers use social media?'. Frequently the media portray a negative side of social media use and this can cause an imbalance in a person's understanding. The leaflet aims to 'break-down' some of the negativity and educate parent/carers about this median of communication used by teenagers which has many positive aspects such as connecting with people in a fun and easy way, keeping in touch with friends and families and allowing growth of individual expression and creativity .

#### *Reflections/questions*

The resource provides a stimulus for discussion by parents/carers with their children about the benefits of the internet but also the importance of keeping safe online. Are parents/carers really aware of the potential warning signs that their child is a victim of online bullying?



## *GUIDANCE ON HOW TO USE THE RESOURCES*

### *EXAMPLE 5: FLIP CARD GAME (NETHERLANDS)*

#### *Aims and overview*

The pupils at a secondary school in the Netherlands, supported by the Open University of the Netherlands, designed a fun and innovative game for one of the parent/carer resources. Six flip cards have been created for parent/carers to help make it easier to discuss cyberbullying with their child. On the front of a card is the specific situation ('problem'), whilst on the back, is advice on how to deal with it ('tip').

#### *Reflections/Questions*

Capturing the barriers in communication that often exist around difficult topics such as cyberbullying, the flip card game seeks to further assist in breaking down these barriers that are so detrimental within families. Students have identified the problem and created a simple, fun solution.



**Resource from Germany**

***FLYER FOR PARENTS  
AND CARERS***

## STEP 1 Recognize Bullying

- Do you observe significant changes in your child's behavior?
- Does your child appear lethargic, or hides in his/her room all day?
- Does your child refuse to go to school?
- Does your child avoid going online, or turns the computer off, when someone else is around?



**WE RECOMMEND TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD.**

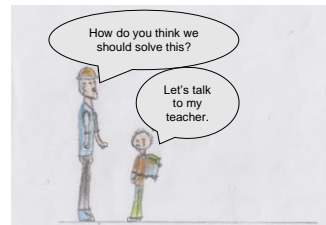
## STEP 2 Talk To Your Child



- Calmly ask if everything is alright and what is going on.
- Explicitly ask about bullying.
- Be empathetic.
- Talk the situation through to get all the details.
- Reassure your child that you love and support him/her.
- Reassure your child that it is not his/her fault that he/she is being bullied.

## STEP 3 Find A Solution – Together

- Ask your child how he/she would like to handle the situation.
- Don't intervene without your child's knowledge.
- Decide whether to talk to, e.g. the homeroom teacher, or involve the police.
- It's a good idea to save the nasty messages or photos your child receives.
- Together with your child, take a look at the privacy settings of the apps your child uses.



## STEP 4 Implement

- Act according to the plan that you and your child came up with together.
- If necessary, go to your child's school or involve the police.
- Keep your child informed about the process.
- Pay more attention to your child's internet activity in the future.



## STEP 5 Build Confidence

- Equip your child with skills to address bullying in the future.
- Educate your child about online safety and privacy on different platforms.
- Help your child to engage in meaningful offline activities.
- Encourage your child to surround him-/herself with people who love and support your child.
- Nurture your child's self-worth, independent of other people's opinions.

## Useful Links For Parents In Germany

**Schau hin!** [www.schau-hin.info](http://www.schau-hin.info)  
**Eltern im Netz** [www.elternimnetz.de](http://www.elternimnetz.de)  
**Klicksafe** [www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de)



Blurred Lives Project  
[www.blurredlives.eu](http://www.blurredlives.eu)

## NO TO CYBERBULLYING

### A Guide For Parents



Photo: Pixabay

This leaflet has been created by students from Konrad-Wachsmann-Schule (Integrierte Sekundarschule) in Berlin, Germany, as part of the Blurred Lives Project. A cross-national, co-participatory exploration of cyberbullying, young people and socio-economic disadvantage, funded by the ERASMUS+ program.




**Resource from England**

***BULLY BLOCKERS:  
YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE  
IN DANGER***

# Bully lockers


## Your Child Might Be In Danger



This is about what a parent should look out for, if their child is being cyberbullied.

We included quotes, signs and images. An example of a website for advice is Anti-Bullying Alliance.

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



"My cousin was bullied because she was raped" – No one deserved to be bullied for something like this.

Your son or daughter might be cyberbullied for the reasons: their acne/scars/ethnicity/culture/religion.

"When looking through people's stories on Snapchat, they said something about someone that was not nice".


"People would call her ugly and make fun of her spots/acne."

"Someone took her picture and stuck it on an alien head".

It can have a horrible effect on his/her mental health.

"Picture were exposed of her and she stopped going to school – they felt insecure and low confidence"

## Signs of CyberBullying



Parents, I'm not saying that you don't know your child, but you child may be affected regularly by cyberbullies. Our research team has come to a conclusion that there is no specific sign to determine whether your child is being cyberbullied. Checking on your child, such as saying "how was your day?" or "how was school. Small questions like this have a big impact as it shows you care about your child, as a parent. Asking questions should also make them feel more comfortable with telling you whether they are being cyberbullied or not (perhaps).



**Resource from Italy**

***POSTERS FOR  
PARENTS/CARERS***

CONSIGLI GENITORI  
PARLATE CON I PROPRI FIGLI SENZA  
LITIGARE E URLARE.  
DITE NO SOLO QUANDO È  
NECESSARIO.

Talk with your kids,  
without bickering  
and screaming. Say  
NO only when it's  
needed

RISPETTARE LA  
PRIVACY DEI  
PROPRI FIGLI

Respect your kids'  
privacy

ABBIATE UN RAPPORTO  
PIÙ STRETTO  
CON I VOSTRI FIGLI!

Have a closer  
relationship with  
your kids!

SII PIÙ PARTECIPANTE NELLA  
VITA DEI TUOI  
FIGLI!  
(MA SENZA ESAGERARE)

Be more involved  
in your kids' life!  
(But not too much)

DOVETE ESSERE  
SEMPRE DISPONIBILI  
PER I VOSTRI  
FIGLI

You must always be  
open with your kids

DATE PIÙ FIDUCIA  
AI VOSTRI FIGLI!

Trust your kids  
more!

**Resource from Northern Ireland**

***UNDERSTANDING***

***CYBERSAFETY***

***(LEAFLET FOR PARENTS/CARERS)***



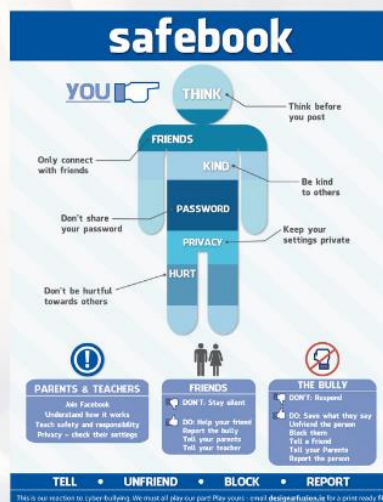
## WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF CYBERBULLYING?

- Someone has withdrawn themselves from normal interactions with friends and family
- Someone starts to avoid using the computer
- Someone has a change in behaviour, beliefs, self-esteem and attitudes



**1/3 OF TEENAGERS WHO EXPERIENCE CYBERBULLYING DO NOT REPORT IT**

- If we are to prevent cyberbullying, we must break the silence involved and empower teenagers to speak out and seek help



## WHY DO TEENAGERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Teenagers use social media to:

- Keep in touch with friends and families
- Connect with people in a fun and easy way
- Share photos and videos
- Get involved with issues
- Play games
- Express themselves
- Be creative

## SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Facebook is the most common way someone can be cyberbullied. If you're being bullied through Facebook or another social networking site, please ensure that you cease all communication with the 'bully' and report it as inappropriate content immediately.

When managing your Facebook page, ensure that you are aware of your page permission settings and how to control what content you post and who can see it.

**1/3 OF TEENAGERS HAVE HAD MEAN, EMBARRASSING THINGS SAID ABOUT THEM ONLINE.**



**Resource from the Netherlands**

# ***FLIP CARD GAME***

**PROBLEM 1**

My child comes home upset

**TIP 1:**

Talk with your child about what happened

**PROBLEM 2**

My child bullies someone at school

**TIP 2:**

Inform the school

**PROBLEM 3**

My child is being bullied

**TIP 3:**

Together with your child, think about ways to stop the bullying

**PROBLEM 4**

My child is being bullied

**TIP 4:**

Do not take immediate action – listen first

**PROBLEM 5**

My child comes home upset

**TIP 5:**

Try to listen as openly as possible

**PROBLEM 6**

The school reports that my child has bullied someone else

**TIP 6:**

Explain the consequences

## WEBSITES FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE

### ENGLAND

- [www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk)
- [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- [www.ditchthelabel.org](http://www.ditchthelabel.org)
- [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- [www.youthworksconsulting.co.uk](http://www.youthworksconsulting.co.uk)
- [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

### GERMANY

- [www.schau-hin.info](http://www.schau-hin.info)
- [www.elternimnetz.de](http://www.elternimnetz.de)
- [www.klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de)

### ITALY

- <https://www.miur.gov.it/bullismo-e-cyberbullismo>
- <https://www.generazioniconnesse.it/site/it/area-genitori/>
- <https://www.genitoredigitale.com/>

### NORTHERN IRELAND

- [www.endbullying.org.uk/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/)
- [www.endbullying.org.uk/publications/pc-toolkit/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/publications/pc-toolkit/)
- [www.endbullying.org.uk/gallery/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour-2/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/gallery/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour-2/)
- [www.endbullying.org.uk/ertbb/](http://www.endbullying.org.uk/ertbb/)

### NETHERLANDS

- [www.meldknop.nl/](http://www.meldknop.nl/)
- [www.pestweb.nl/](http://www.pestweb.nl/)
- [www.mediawijsheid.nl/](http://www.mediawijsheid.nl/)



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A College of Queen's University Belfast



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*TO ACCESS ALL PROJECT RESOURCES, GO TO*

[HTTPS://WWW.OU.NL/WEB/BLURRED-LIVES/RESOURCES](https://www.ou.nl/web/blurred-lives/resources)