United Against Bullying School Case Study: Addressing the issue of online bullying

How Whitefriars Primary School, Rushden, Northamptonshire, developed a questionnaire to understand and address the issue of cyber-bullying

Context of our anti-bullying work

Online bullying is an ongoing issue for staff to deal with in school. We are often dealing with incidents that have happened at home and then spill over into school.

Our School Council have taken part in a cluster- wide initiative this year, with the focus being online behaviour/e-safety.

What we hoped to achieve

We wanted to raise awareness and understanding as a school - what should we do if we are bullied online, or we feel uncomfortable about things we see or hear? Staff regularly teach e-safety to the children, but we were looking for a different approach which would engage all children.

We felt it was important that all of the children had input into this important work and that use of Pupil Voice would be vital. We wanted to see a shared responsibility across the school.

The action we took

Our School Council designed a questionnaire to find out about children's behaviour online and if they had any concerns or worries. They had support from our Computing Lead with this task. They then started to create an information leaflet based on what the children reported- this led to a lot of very passionate discussion!

They then went back to their classes and asked for suggestions on how to improve the leaflet- what else would you like to see in it? What other information would help you feel safe online?

Once the leaflet was completed, School Council ran an assembly to present the finished work to all pupils.

Impact and outcomes of the work

All children were engaged in the project because they had the opportunity to contribute their ideas. The leaflet now 'belongs' to them - that shared ownership means it is very important to the children that everyone follows it. It is also a useful tool to use on a regular basis in class.

Over the next year we will review our online issues through use of regular questionnaires for the children. We will adapt our leaflet if needed, according to the needs of the children. We will expect to see fewer issues involving online safety and behaviour.

As part of our ongoing work with parents, we plan to invite them into school so that the children can present and discuss their leaflet with them. We hope that this is a 'way in' for parents who may then want to discuss issues with staff.

What we have learned

As e-safety issues are unlikely to disappear, we need to continue to find ways to involve the pupils in their learning.
Also, there are groups of parents who can feel threatened coming into school - we feel that the invitation from children is much more positive and will hopefully help to support them when dealing with online issues at home.