Cyberbullying: Experiences and support needs of students in a secondary school

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA - Anti-Bullying Alliance
BEI - British Education Index
BPS - British Psychological Society
CEOP - Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
CYP - Children and Young People
DCLG - Department for Communities Local Government
DCSF - Department for Children Schools and Families
DfE - Department for Education
DfES - Department for Education and Skills
EP - Educational Psychologist
EPS - Educational Psychology Service
ERIC - Education Resources Information Centre,
ECM - Every Child Matters
FFT - Fischer Family Trust
IBM, SPSS - International Business Machines Corporation, Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ICT - Information Communication Technology
IM – Instant Messenger
ISW - Inclusion Support Worker
IRB - Institutional Review Board
LA - Local Authority
LSCB - Local Safeguarding Children’s Board
MMORPGs - Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games
NASUWT - National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
NCT - Nominal Group Technique
Ofcom - Office of Communications
Ofsted - Office for Standards in Education
PSO - Pastoral Support Officers
GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS cont’d

SCiL - Secondary Centre for Learning
SENCo - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SNS – Social Networking Site
UK - United Kingdom
UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VIF - Variance Inflation Factors
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ABSTRACT

The University of Manchester
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Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology
Cyberbullying: Experiences and support needs of students in a secondary school
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The arrival of Smartphones has changed the way young people communicate with one another. These devices allow youngsters to have continuous access to their social world away from the prying eyes of adults. Unfortunately, increased access to online networking provides new means through which they can be bullied.

Case study methodology employing mixed methods was adopted. The study consisted of two distinct phases and had two separate aims. During phase 1 of the study, a total of 352, Year 7 and Year 10 students were asked to complete a questionnaire, the aim of which was to investigate the prevalence and extent of cyberbullying amongst students. Quantitative analysis of the data revealed that students were reluctant to report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff. Phase 2 of this study investigated this finding further. A total of 18, Year 7 and Year 10 students participated in three separate focus group discussions, the purpose of which was to explore students’ views on what actions need to be taken in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff.

The results from the questionnaire data revealed that Smartphones are deeply embedded in young people’s lives even among those from the most socially deprived areas of England. Over a quarter of the students indicated that they had experienced any one of ten different unpleasant cyber incidents. The findings also suggested that much of the cyberbullying occurred within the context of students’ social relationships in real life. Data from the focus group discussions highlighted that students wanted access to a diverse range of reporting routes. Notably, students stressed the importance of raising the profile of anti-bullying initiatives within school. Once this was embedded, students perhaps would be more willing to assert their rights and report incidents of bullying.

Implications of the findings are discussed in relation to extending the focus of e-safety education beyond both technological solutions and stranger danger. Highlighting the differences between relationships in the real and virtual worlds to students is discussed. There is also a focus on engaging students in debate around ethical questions such as, identifying their rights in relation to bullying and learning to manage their own interpersonal conflicts.

Keywords: cyberbullying, Smartphones, secondary school, e-safety, peer relationships
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

Cyberbullying is a general term describing insulting or harmful electronic communication that often (but not exclusively), occurs between children and young people. This could be via a Smartphone, computer, laptop, tablet or online gaming platform. It can take place via a range of media, such as text, email, social networking sites, video-hosting sites, messenger, and online games. The impetus for this study on cyberbullying arose from the researcher’s own professional practice working as an Educational Psychologist (EP) in both primary and secondary schools within a Local Authority (LA). Staff reports of incidents of students experiencing unpleasant cyber communications and/or cyberbullying were very topical. Some of these incidents were extreme cases of cyberbullying which had devastating effects on those being targeted. The following four descriptions are of real-life accounts of cyberbullying incidents that were reported to the researcher in 2012 by staff working in schools. These incidents highlight the harm that can result from young people’s misuse of technology.

The first incident was reported to the researcher in February 2012. This incident involved a 14-year-old student who attempted to take her life after months of being harassed and threatened online. This particular student had witnessed a violent physical assault on a teenage boy and as a result had provided information to the police about the attackers. It transpired that the friends of the attackers had been relentless in their taunts, which were publicly posted on Facebook accusing her of ‘being a snitch’ and threatening to ‘sort her out’. It was only in hospital after having her stomach pumped because of overdosing on Paracetomol and her mother’s sleeping tablets did the student reveal what had been happening to her. In April 2012, the researcher was informed about another incident concerning a 12-year-old student who refused to attend school because she dreaded the humiliation of hurtful taunts and sniggers she received from her peers. A group of male students had obtained a photograph of her and Photoshopped (a neologism referring to a popular image-editing software program) it. The end product consisted of a sexually explicit photograph of her face pasted onto the body of a naked pornographic picture of a woman. This image was quickly circulated around via BlackBerry Messenger and was viewed by a wide audience within the school setting. In May 2012, two other cyberbullying incidents were reported to the researcher. The first incident involved a 14-year-old student, who became aware of a defamatory website that had been set up. The website accused him of being a paedophile and mocked him for being gay. Visitors to the website were encouraged to add further unkind and hurtful comments about him. Due to his humiliation and embarrassment, he also refused to attend school. The last incident to be described involved a 13-year-old
student whose father had innocently posted a holiday photograph of her and her friend in their bikinis on Facebook. Flippant comments stating that her friend had a much more attractive and slimmer body were posted underneath the photograph. Other young people decided to post further comments stating that ‘she should go on a diet and lose weight’. After reading these comments and hearing similar remarks being made to her at school, she became obsessed with losing weight and refused to eat food.

A clear message from these anecdotes is that, although cyberbullying is a comparatively new method of bullying, it can have devastating consequences on those who are targeted. The decision to carry out the study in this area was based on the researcher’s knowledge of the vulnerability of some children and young people to cyberbullying. It is the researcher’s view, that failure to address all forms of bullying; including cyberbullying that occurs between students that attend the same school setting, perpetuates an environment that is unsafe and not supportive of their academic achievement and personal, social and emotional development and well being. Educational personnel have the responsibility for ensuring that students have an equal opportunity to learn and develop in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, aggression, violence, and abuse. The inherent dignity and worth of every child should be respected; this is a basic human right, set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989).

Further rationale for the study came about because in 2012 the researcher became a member of the LA anti-bullying strategy steering group. Members of the group were responsible for the planning and devising of a document titled LA anti-bullying strategy (LA, 2013). This document provided an over-arching framework and standards for the LA and partner agencies. The purpose of the framework was to ensure that all forms of bullying are tackled as a safeguarding issue, in not only schools but also wherever children, young people, vulnerable adults and families come together in the wider community as a whole.

Prior to the formulating an anti-bullying strategy and action plan, key stakeholders such as children, young people as well as adults within the LA were invited through a consultation process to consider a range of aspects and issues around bullying that were particularly important or pertinent to them. Some of the information obtained from the consultation process was used to set key objectives for the LA anti-bullying action plan. One key issue and concern children and young people raised was that of cyberbullying. This did not come as a surprise to the researcher, because as already mentioned earlier; school staff had already communicated their concerns about the increasing numbers of students in schools becoming vulnerable to the risk of cyberbullying. Thus, the decision to carry out the research on cyberbullying within the LA
was viewed as a response to the fact that cyberbullying had been identified as an issue by teaching staff and children and young people within the LA.

To help facilitate the delivery of the LA anti-bullying strategy (LA, 2013) an anti-bullying action plan was devised. The action plan consists of five key objectives, which sit within five separate strand headings. Under each key objective within the action plan are specific aims and required actions. An outline of the five strands, the key objectives and the aims of the anti-bullying action plan are set out in Appendix 1. It was agreed amongst members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group that aim 2: ‘assess different types of bullying and compare with current statistics’ within Strand 1 of the anti-bullying action plan referred to as ‘managing use of data’ should be embarked upon, with one of the focuses being on exploring children and young people’s experiences of cyberbullying.

This aim provided a timely opportunity for the researcher to express and share her interest, knowledge and past involvement in a small research project on cyberbullying (Summers, 2011), with members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group. Through discussions with lead professionals, it was revealed that the LA did not possess any other data or documentation on the experiences of cyberbullying amongst young people residing within the LA. Its nature, scale, and dimensions were virtually unknown. It could be argued that to determine how best to address cyberbullying in all its forms, it is important to first have accurate figures on the prevalence and extent of cyberbullying amongst young people within the local context. The gathering of this data would meet increasing pressure for Local Authorities to ‘know their own’ and be responsive to the local context rather than rely on ‘one-size fits all approach’ (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010).

In addition to staff reports and LA anti-bullying initiatives, cyberbullying has also received a significant amount of media attention which seems to support the idea that it is an “emerging public health problem” (Cesaroni, Downing & Alvi, 2012, p. 199). Alternatively, it has been argued that the media may have overstated the problem of cyberbullying for the purpose of selling a story. For example, Olweus (2012) maintains that adults’ and researchers’ fears regarding cyberbullying may in fact be exaggerated. Fears regarding perceived threats to moral and social order have usually been linked with anxieties about youth culture and these fears tend to escalate into ‘moral panic’ (Yar, 2005).

The way in which the interest around cyberbullying has manifested itself appears to fulfil some of the classic signs of ‘moral panic’. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that cyberbullying is a ‘game changer’ and has the potential for real harm. Perhaps an important question to investigate is whether incidents of cyberbullying among young people are really increasing at
such an exponential rate? To uncover an answer to this question further exploration into the phenomenon of cyberbullying is required. Previous research findings of cyberbullying prevalence rates need to be verified. There is also a need to extend and build upon the limitations of past research and bring professionals’, educators’ and parents’ understanding of the phenomenon up-to-date. Hence, the initial aim of phase 1 of the study was to raise awareness about the nature and extent of cyberbullying experienced by young people within the LA.

Seemingly one of the challenges in addressing any form of bullying is encouraging students to seek help. With regards to the guidance and advice set out in the ‘LA Anti-bullying Strategy’ (2013) document, ensuring that children and young people report any form of bullying incidents is one of the aspirations within the LA anti-bullying mission statement which states, “we aim to reduce the frequency of bullying incidents and to increase the likelihood that incidents are disclosed to responsible adults” (p. 3). However, analyses of the data collected during phase 1 of the study indicated that this aspiration was not being fulfilled. This was a concern to the members of the LA anti-bullying strategy steering group. In order to address this, it was agreed that during phase 2 of the study students should be given the opportunity to participate in structured focus group discussions with the researcher. The purpose of these discussions would be, to elicit students’ views on what actions might be mobilised in schools to support students in reporting incidents of cyberbullying to staff in school. To the researcher’s knowledge this was an area that had not been explored in previous research on cyberbullying.

1.2 Contextual information

This section provides brief contextual information about the locality in which this research study is based. According to the ‘English Indices of Deprivation’ document (DCLG, 2010) the LA in which this study was undertaken was ranked the fourth most deprived in England in 2010. In fact, almost half of the population within the LA were deemed as living in areas ranked in the 10% most deprived areas of the country. It could be hypothesised that those individuals that live in economically disadvantaged families like many young people within the LA in which this research was undertaken may not be able to afford such luxuries as computers, i-Phones and game consoles. This could mean that these youngsters are perhaps less susceptible to experiencing cyberbullying than young people who live in more affluent areas of the country. This research study may be able to reveal whether the risk of experiencing cyberbullying extends to those youngsters living in more socially and economically deprived areas of England.
1.3 The researcher's role as a practitioner Educational Psychologist

The ‘British Psychological Society’ (BPS), Professional Practice Guidelines state that:

Professional educational psychologists are concerned to support and promote the proper development of young people. In doing so, they work not just directly with young people, but also with their parents and families and with the adults who teach and care for them.


The document goes on to state that EPs are part of the “welfare network” around a child, working with all other professionals who may be involved; their “primary focus should always be on achieving positive outcomes for young people” (p. 4). Unlike the roles of other members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group, the scope of work carried out by EPs is extensive and encompasses many competencies and skills. Following their meta-analysis of the reviews of EP practice Fallon et al. (2010) defined EPs as:

Fundamentally scientist-practitioners who utilise, for the benefit of children and young people (CYP), psychological skills, knowledge and understanding through the functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, research and training, at organisational, group or individual level across educational, community and care settings, with a variety of role partners. (p. 4).

In fact, former government publications in the United Kingdom, such as ‘Every Child Matters’ (ECM, DfES, 2004) underline the importance of identifying and utilising the qualities and skills unique to EPs. One of the key findings of the report ‘Review of the Functions and Contribution of Educational Psychologists in England and Wales in light of ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ by Farrell et al. (2006) was the importance of the relationship that the EP can build with school staff, parents and other professionals. Not only do EPs have the skills in establishing and maintaining relationships with the people they work with they are also strategically placed to provide links between the school, students and their families allowing all involved to have a greater understanding of any current issues being researched or initiatives that are being developed.
Another important role of the EP is to work at a strategic level; this usually involves carrying out research and advising on educational policy development. Up until September 2012, the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in which the researcher worked had always delivered its service through a time allocation model. However, as a result of budget pressures, EPs’ time allocated to schools was reduced to a more limited core service. Schools were however, given the opportunity to buy in additional LA EP provision. Fortunately, EPs within the team had been given a small amount of protected time to be involved in strategic work. This meant that the researcher had the opportunity to attend bi-monthly LA anti-bullying strategy steering group meetings. What’s more, because the researcher was studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology, she also had a limited amount of protected time to carry out research. Other members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group had not been afforded this luxury. Unlike EPs, they did not have the same experience of working in school establishments or possess the same knowledge of the school context or systems and few held the same research competencies or skills that many EPs have acquired over their years of training and working.

More specifically, the role of the EP is inextricably linked with eliciting the views and perspectives of children and young people in order to improve their social, educational, emotional and spiritual development. The ECM agenda (DfES, 2004) demonstrates an explicit commitment to hearing and valuing the views of young people. In the wake of the apparent move towards a greater involvement of young people in decision-making, promoting the participation of students in group discussions about what steps could be taken by schools to overcome the barriers that may prevent them from coming forward and reporting unpleasant cyber incidents has the potential to foster positive outcomes for children and young people. Furthermore, consulting with students would be pivotal to filling in knowledge gaps and devising possible effective strategies.

There was a final expectation that the overall findings from the study would be presented to senior staff working in the school that participated in the study. There were also plans to present the research findings to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCos), Pastoral Support Officers (PSO), members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group as well as the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB). This information would hopefully encourage reflection and debate amongst educational personnel about how to strengthen and sustain anti-bullying practices and responses especially around the issue of cyberbullying. Indeed, educational personnel need to develop an understanding of the online world of students and increase their knowledge about the variety of responses and resources that are available to address cyberbullying.
1.4 Overview of the research study

The research study aims to help fill the gaps in the research on cyberbullying identified from undertaking an extensive literature review (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) as well as increase LA knowledge around the issue of cyberbullying. The study comprises two phases. Phase 1 of the study was descriptive. A questionnaire was administered to Year 7 and Year 10 students in one Secondary Centre for Learning (SCfL), the aim of which was to obtain data about; (a) the prevalence of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students as well as (b) the extent to which students interpreted these unpleasant cyber incidents as actual cyberbullying. The reason for a clear distinction being made between these two separate cyber experiences is briefly explained below.

Information regarding the prevalence of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by young people is equally important as reporting on the prevalence of cyberbullying as it can serve as an early warning system. Knowledge about the prevalence and different types of unpleasant cyber interactions that occur between adolescents could be used to help inform future borough work on prevention and response strategies. For instance it could help shape e-safety work, and lessons in subjects such as Information Communication Technology (ICT), citizenship and drama and thus help keep young people safe from harm. Previous researchers in this area as well as teaching staff have usually viewed all young people’s unpleasant cyber communications as cyberbullying. However, endorsing every unpleasant cyber communication with the label cyberbullying is misleading and is likely to be inaccurate. Young people may indicate that they have experienced negative interactions in cyber space but an important question is; does this really constitute cyberbullying? In an attempt to improve the accuracy of cyberbullying prevalence rates, this study makes a clear distinction between; (a) the prevalence of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents and (b) the prevalence of young people’s perceptions of being cyberbullied.

The research questions guiding the quantitative component of the study are as follows:

**RQ1:** What are students' experiences of using ICT?

**RQ2a:** What is the prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students?

**RQ2b:** Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?
RQ3: Do those students who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?

RQ4: How many students self-identify as having been the target of cyberbullying?

RQ4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

RQ5: When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do students go to confide in and seek help?

From the analyses of the data from phase 1, it was evident that incidents of students coming forward to report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to staff in school were low. Two important factors in addressing cyberbullying once it has occurred are; (a) the willingness for young people to report incidents to school staff and (b) school staff having the capacity to respond appropriately. If cyberbullying incidents go unreported, how can school staff be expected to respond to such incidents appropriately? It seems that one of the first challenges in addressing cyberbullying is encouraging those students who are being cyberbullied to go and seek help by confiding in school staff. Phase 2 of the research aimed to expand on the findings derived from phase 1. Students were given the opportunity to participate in focus group discussions, the aim of which was to identify possible solutions and ideas about how to address the issue of low reporting rates of cyberbullying to school staff. As far as the researcher is aware, no other studies on cyberbullying have investigated this.

The final overarching research question which guided the second phase of the study was:

RQ6: What are students’ ideas and views about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff?

Giving students the opportunity to be involved in discussions about possible solutions to address low reporting rates of cyberbullying to school staff would be a significant proactive first step in overcoming the obstacles that often allow incidents of bullying to go unchallenged. There was an expectation that the findings from the overall study would encourage reflection and debate about how to strengthen and sustain anti-bullying practices.
1.5 Structure of the thesis

1.5.1 Chapter 2: Literature Review.

This chapter contains a review and analysis of the literature in relation to cyberbullying. There is an exploration of the specificity and complexity of cyberbullying and published government policies and documents that provide information of the legal, regulatory and good practice frameworks for preventing and responding to cyberbullying in educational contexts in England are outlined. Following on from this, the findings of specific United Kingdom (UK) and international research studies on this topic are discussed and critically evaluated. This helps highlight the potential gap in current knowledge base in the area of cyberbullying. The chapter concludes with the aims of the study and the original contribution to knowledge that it intends to make, after which, all the research questions are outlined.

1.5.2 Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter details the researcher’s ontological, epistemological and axiological positions. It also describes the research design adopted, a Follow-up Explanations Model developed by Creswell (2003). The researcher’s critical realist stance leads to the adoption of a mixed-methods design where both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis methods are employed. Sampling and participant recruitment are detailed and a chronology of data collection in each of the two phases of the study are described. A critique of the methods used is provided and ethical principles are considered. The chapter concludes with a detailed operational risk analysis.

1.5.3 Chapters 4 and 5: Results

The results from each phase of the study are presented in separate chapters. Chapter 4 reports the findings from the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data. These findings are discussed in relation to research questions 1 to 5. Chapter 5 reports the findings from the qualitative analysis of the focus group data. Thematic networks and quotes from the data are included to illustrate the process of analysis and how themes were identified. These findings are discussed in relation to the final research question. Both chapters conclude with a summary of the findings.
1.5.4 Chapter 6: Discussion

The chapter opens with a reiteration of the research aims. The findings in relation to each research question are critically discussed and considered in relation to previous literature and the research findings. A theoretical framework for conceptualising cyberbullying at the contextual level is also proposed. The chapter concludes by considering the wider implications of this research for practice, followed by a discussion of the unforeseen limitations of the study and recommendations for future work.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter outline

This chapter begins by outlining the literature review search strategy that was undertaken. A brief discussion about the development of ICT is then provided with a particular focus on the impact of the arrival of Smartphones. An overview of the definition of non-cyber forms of bullying is given along with a brief exploration of the specificity and complexity of cyberbullying. Published government policies and documents that provide information of the legal, regulatory and good practice frameworks for preventing and responding to cyberbullying in educational contexts in England are then outlined. Following on from this, the findings of specific UK and international research studies on this topic are critically analysed. Specific areas discussed are; the prevalence of cyberbullying among young people, the possible factors that might make some young people more susceptible to experiencing cyberbullying and whether the recipients of cyberbullying are also likely to be the targets of bullying in real life. Unique challenges students face with regards to reporting their experiences of cyberbullying and the difficulties school staff face in responding to those reports are also outlined. The final part of the chapter states the aims of the research and the original contribution to knowledge that is expected, after which, the research questions are outlined.

2.2 Literature search strategy

Journal articles and publications considered relevant for this literature review were those that had been peer-reviewed, written in the English language and were not more than eight years old. Although a wide range of terminology has been used in the research literature to describe cyberbullying, (examples of which are set out in Table 2.1 on the next page) the keyword that is predominantly used and most relevant to the study was ‘cyberbullying’.
Table 2.1 Examples of phrases used to describe cyberbullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root Word</th>
<th>Word Endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyber</td>
<td>bullying, aggression, harassment, victimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic</td>
<td>bullying, aggression, harassment, victimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>bullying, aggression, harassment, victimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>bullying, aggression, harassment, victimisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>bullying, aggression, harassment, Victimisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initially, the term cyberbullying was used as an individual key word search within electronic databases ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), BEI (British Education Index) and PsycINFO which are available online through the University of Manchester library. Whilst examining the selected abstracts many were deemed irrelevant and the full text of some of the articles was unobtainable. The search was expanded to include those articles that addressed the topic of cyberbullying and: (a) reported the incidence rates of youngsters being cyberbullied; and (b) examined the associations between cyberbullying victimisation and age, gender and where possible academic achievement.

In an attempt to yield better results, the search was refined using the search filter facility. Key words were entered into ‘Boolean operators’ search option, these words were linked using the connector word ‘OR’. The ‘OR’ operator allows the retrieval of articles that contained any of the search terms. For example, the search cyberbullying or gender retrieved articles that contained cyberbullying, gender or both terms. Results were all inclusive. However, it was necessary to continue the search for relevant literature by looking through the references within relevant key articles. This search was carried out using the ‘find citation’, ‘find similar’ or ‘finding citing articles’ options on the PsycINFO database. References from key articles were also searched using the Internet particularly the Google Scholar website.

Additional information on cyberbullying was accessed through the help of the researcher’s tutor at the University of Manchester who kindly informed her about the publication of special journal issues on the topic of cyberbullying. Several relevant text books that focus on cyberbullying were purchased through the website Amazon. Further website searches were undertaken in
order to access published government policies and documents that provide information of the legal, regulatory and good practice frameworks for preventing and responding to cyberbullying in educational contexts in England.

2.3 Evolution of information communication technologies

The rapid growth of technology particularly the arrival of Smartphones, which offer Internet access, email and a variety of Internet-based applications, is changing the way many of us, particularly adolescents communicate with one another. Smartphones such as the iPhone and BlackBerry diversify and expand “the spatial and temporal locations of internet use among young people by providing anywhere, anytime accessibility” (Mascheroni & Olafsson, 2013, p.8). Bond (2014) refers to Smartphones as ‘mobile technologies’ as youngsters no longer have to share the family computer at home. Their connection to the Internet has become “personalised, private and mobile” (Katz, 2012, p. 13).

In fact, people of varying ages have become so reliant on their mobile phones that they struggle to imagine a world without it. Many people have become so attached to their mobile phone it has become almost like a “body part” and some people fear being without a mobile phone which has been termed: “nomophobia” (Katz, 2012, p. 13). Mobile phone/Smartphone and Internet use have become virtually universal among adolescents within the UK. According to the latest Communications Market Report written by Ofcom (2013) around three in five (62%) of teenagers (12 - 15 years of age) own a Smartphone. Activities that were traditionally computer/laptop based, such as sending emails, surfing the net and social networking are now commonly conducted on a Smartphone.

There is no doubt that access to the Internet using Smartphones has opened up new and exciting opportunities. Particularly for young people, it enables them to seek out social support, explore their identity, develop interpersonal and critical thinking skills, as well as gain educational benefits generated from expansive access to knowledge (Jackson et al., 2006; Blais, Craig, Pepler & Connolly, 2008). Unfortunately, one disadvantage of technological advancement such as the Internet and Smartphones is that it provides a powerful weapon for antisocial behaviour. It has specifically opened up a new venue for bullying which has moved from the real world setting to the virtual cyber-world of school-aged children and young people. Within this cyber-world some youngsters are being exposed to unpleasant, threatening or
dangerous cyber interactions that put their safety and emotional well-being at risk (Li, Smith & Cross, 2012).

It is important to note that previous research in the area of cyberbullying has focused on young people’s experiences of cyberbullying through the use of mobile phones and different media accessed through the Internet. How the ownership and use of Smartphones impact on the likelihood of young people experiencing cyberbullying has not yet been investigated and is a noticeable gap in the research that needs addressing.

2.4 Avoiding the use of labels

The labels bully and victim are used often by media and researchers to refer to children who bully others and children who are bullied. However, there are several important reasons why the researcher has avoided using labels such as bully and victim. First, labels are unhelpful, because they suggest that behaviour is fixed and is unlikely to change. Dweck (2006) states that, labels send out a message which implies that a child has a permanent trait as opposed to being a developing person. Fortunately, behaviour can change from one situation to another and over time. Secondly, labels can be harmful. If a child is labelled as a bully, it may signal to their peers that they are mean and should be avoided, likewise if a child is labelled as a victim this may send out the message that they a weak and should be pitied. Therefore, throughout the rest of this thesis, an individual who is bullied is referred to as the target or recipient of bullying. The individual carrying out the bullying will be referred to as the agent.

2.5 Non-cyber forms of bullying

To understand cyberbullying, it is important to first discuss what is meant by non-cyber forms of bullying. Non-cyber forms of bullying for many people are typically known as traditional forms of face-to-face bullying that occurs in the real world. The majority of the literature defines this type of bullying as a type of repeated aggression that is intentionally carried out by one or more powerful individuals and targeted usually towards a single person who is not able to defend him or herself. Olweus’ (1993) early research in Norway identified a number of factors, which he considered crucial when differentiating between aggressive behaviours and bullying. He reasoned that bullying behaviours: (a) generally comprise of offensive actions committed repeatedly and frequently against the same person or group; (b) are characterised by an
imbalance of power in that the targeted person has trouble defending him or herself and is virtually helpless against the perpetrator(s); and (c) are intentionally enacted to inflict some form of harm whether it be physical, psychological or social. In almost all research on bullying, these three components (repetition, power imbalance and intention) are used to distinguish bullying behaviours from that of aggressive behaviours.

Typically, for as long as children and young people have attended school, there has been some form of bullying. Up until more recent times, bullying behaviours consisted of actions such as tripping someone up as he or she walked by, making abusive comments regarding students’ clothes or personal appearance, spreading rumours or gossip, or simply ignoring someone’s presence. In each of these examples, students were situated together in a common public space such as a classroom, hallway, or social hangout (Couvillon & Ilieva, 2011). Thus, non-cyber forms of bullying generally occur in public places and the agents of bullying behaviours are in direct contact with the person or people they are targeting and face anyone else who happens to be nearby, including teachers. Nowadays, however, bullying has taken on a new dimension. With the advent and continued growth of technologies, “the transmutation of bullying has occurred, from the physical to the virtual world” (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006, p. 152). Some youngsters now hide behind their computer screens, mobile phones, Smartphones or games consoles and engage in a variety of harmful behaviours. This migration of bullying to the virtual world has been termed cyberbullying.

2.6 Cyberbullying

Whenever researchers begin working in a new area, there are not surprisingly conceptual issues that need to be resolved and cyberbullying has certainly been no exception. Defining the parameters of cyberbullying (e.g., which communication technologies are involved, how they are used, what is said to whom and with what effect) has proven somewhat difficult, in part because the methods used to cyberbully are varied. What’s more, cyberbullying behaviours may continually change as technology progresses. Some of the definitions of cyberbullying that appear to have been accepted and are regularly cited in publications on the topic of cyberbullying are provided in Table 2.2 on the next page.

The common assumption is that cyberbullying represents a progression or continuation of non-cyber forms of bullying such as traditional face-to-face bullying made possible by ICT. The cyberbullying definitions set out in Table 2.2 on the next page include many of the important constructs common in definitions of non-cyber bullying (e.g., repetition, power imbalance,
intentionality and actions that cause harm) but they also highlight the changing nature of young people’s communication and interaction by acknowledging the use of ICT. However, considering cyberbullying as merely an electronic form of bullying is not an entirely straightforward process. It is still debatable as to whether cyberbullying is a distinct construct, or is just a means of conducting non-cyber forms of bullying through ICT.

### Table 2.1: Conceptual definitions of cyberbullying commonly used in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Definition of Cyberbullying</th>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Cyberbullying is sending or posting harmful or cruel texts or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices” (p. 1).</td>
<td>Willard (2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else” (p. 6).</td>
<td>DCSF (2007a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly or over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (p. 376).</td>
<td>Smith et al. (2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices” (p. 5).</td>
<td>Hinduja and Patchin (2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cyberbullying is any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others” (p. 278).</td>
<td>Tokunaga (2010).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cyberbullying does share some characteristics of non-cyber forms of bullying. However, assuming that it is a simple progression or continuation of bullying in the real world neglects the specificity and complexity of the cyber context. Staff in schools should recognise the ways in which cyberbullying differs from other forms of bullying and reflect that in how they respond to it (DCSF, 2007a). The characteristics and issues that are unique to cyberbullying will now be discussed.
2.6.1 Repetition and the viral nature of cyberbullying.

Although the inclusion of repetition in Olweus’ (1993) definition of bullying in generally accepted, there is debate about its nature and importance within cyberbullying. The potential viral nature of cyberbullying makes the factor of repetition problematic to operationalise. An example of why this may be the case, is given by Slonje, Smith and Frisen (2013); they state that one cyberbullying act may readily “snowball” out of the initial control of the bully (p. 26). For instance, an offensive image or video-clip of someone posted on a website only once may still reflect the essence of repetition. This is because many people may access the website where the image has been posted and go on to make further comments about the image or even circulate it to others. Therefore, a single aggressive act can result in continued and widespread ridicule and humiliation for the youngster being targeted.

The recruitment and involvement of bystanders in cyberbullying has been termed “accessories” as their actions of forwarding on hurtful messages or images to others may actively support the original cyberbullying act (DCSF, 2007a, p. 26). Unfortunately, the captivation and recruitment of bystanders in cyberbullying becomes practically impossible to control. Furthermore, the insecurity of not knowing how many people have seen the malicious comments or images usually compounds the misery for the person being targeted. According to Heirman and Walrave (2008), the involvement of a large audience of bystanders is not a new aspect in the bullying context. In fact research has shown that youngsters carrying out bullying behaviours partially draw motivation for their behaviour out of this audience. However, unlike cyberbullying, non-cyber forms of bullying are limited in extent to the peers of the local school community.

Campbell (2005) also comments that, with non-cyber forms of bullying the memory of repeated words and taunts should usually fade. On the other hand, cyberbullying involves the permanence of the written word or image. Therefore, a youngster may only have one negative cyberbullying experience but may repeatedly revisit the written taunt and re-live the experience which may act like repeated acts of cyberbullying.

2.6.2 Anonymity and imbalance of power.

Olweus’ (1993) definition emphasises the actual or perceived imbalance of power in bullying behaviour. Electronic communications have made it possible to carry out bullying behaviours without a physical confrontation. Therefore, no longer does the youngster carrying out the
bullying have the advantage of being the bigger, the more socially popular or more aggressive child in the school (O’Higgens Norman & Connolly, 2011). Power imbalance is more likely to be associated with the fact that agents of cyberbullying can more readily conceal their identity. Furthermore, “the anonymity of being online has empowered those who may not have typically shown aggression in an open forum” (Shariff, 2008, p. 31). This may be an important aspect of power in the online experience; by withholding one’s identity, the agent potentially has the upper hand in online communications. The aspect of anonymity is at odds with the generally accepted definition of bullying. Goodstein (2007) argues that the Internet has “democratised” bullying, in that it has provided a power to those who would not traditionally have intimidated others (p.82).

This online anonymity is often referred to as “dissociative anonymity” (Suler, 2004, p. 322). It is reasonable to believe that once youngsters have successfully carried out cyberbullying anonymously and experienced the feeling of power, it is more likely that they will continue to carry out their bullying behaviour online (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2008). Taking into account the furtive nature of cyberbullying one could assume that, unlike non-cyber forms of bullying, the negative impact of cyberbullying on young people may be greater. Kowalski et al. (2008) claim that not knowing the person carrying out the cyberbullying is probably a more distressing experience than actually knowing who the person is. This is because youngsters may end up distrusting all of their peers. This is likely to create emotional stress as well as place a strain on developing and maintaining social relationships (Kowalski & Limber, 2007).

Lastly, Grigg (2010) states that imbalance of power may also build upon the situational advantage(s) that the agent has over the person they are targeting, such as high social status in some online group together with the support of other members of the group. The combination of anonymity, the public nature of the cyber incident along with the ability to continually harass the person being targeted may actually be the factors that create an imbalance in power relations (Dooley, Pyzalski & Cross, 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008).

### 2.6.3 Intentionality.

In the cyber context, intentionality is much more difficult to identify due to the indirect nature of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009). The lack of non-verbal cues, voice expression and gestures make it difficult for recipients to clearly determine the intention of a single message that has been sent. Similarly, it may also be difficult for the sender to realise when a joke has gone too far. Therefore, the agent’s intentions and the targeted person’s reactions remain partly hidden (Kowalski et al., 2008). Thus, the criterion of intention in
cyberbullying is difficult to measure and depends upon whether the impact on or the agent’s intention perceived by the recipient is deemed as negative.

Katz (2012) argues that there has been a coarsening of language between young people during cyber interactions, which means that some young people may give little thought of the hurt that their comments or messages may cause others. Without non-verbal feedback, self-regulation and empathy for the recipient of cyberbullying may be lowered and this undermines the agent’s feelings of remorse which may lead to some youngsters becoming even more emboldened and they move to even higher levels of cruelty (Brown, Jackson & Cassidy, 2006; Willard, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Suler, (2004) has termed the loosening (or complete abandonment) of social restrictions and inhibitions that would otherwise be present in normal face-to-face interactions as the “online disinhibition effect” (p. 321). According to Suler (2004), some youngsters “split or dissociate online fiction from offline fact” (p. 323) and view the reality that occurs online as game-like in nature. These youngsters will remain unconvinced that they are actually harming or hurting someone’s feelings since they consider cyberbullying to be an imaginary act of bullying which is referred to as “dissociative imagination” (Suler, 2004, p. 323).

2.6.4 Intrusiveness.

Probably the most unique and difficult features of cyberbullying is the fact that the confine of one’s home no longer provides temporary safety or relief for those who are experiencing cyberbullying. The physical separation between the individual carrying out the bullying and the individual who is the target of bullying is no longer a limitation in the frequency, scope and depth of harm experienced or executed (Heirman & Walrave, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). As Willard (2007) explains, online abuse can be vicious for those being targeted as there is no escape, “cyberbullying can be happening, 24/7” (p. 1). The 24 hours, seven days a week accessibility provided by ICT seems to facilitate cyberbullying behaviour and since the boundaries of cyberbullying are limitless, targets of cyberbullying may experience a prolonged sense of victimisation (Brown et al., 2006). What also complicates the potential outcome of cyberbulling, is that the young person being targeted is likely to be confronted with an unpleasant message or image, when he or she is alone without the direct support from friends or peers (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).
2.7 UK government policies on preventing and responding to cyberbullying in educational contexts

The literature review alerted the researcher to a number of government policies and Acts that have bearing on schools in relation to cyberbullying and e-safety. Successive UK governments have made a strong commitment to tackling all forms of bullying. Before analysing some of the research findings on cyberbullying an overview of the educational policies and good practice frameworks for preventing and responding to cyberbullying in educational contexts in England will be given.

2.7.1 Labour government’s educational policies on cyberbullying.

Under the Labour government, active steps were taken to keeping children and young people safe, especially from new threats such as cyberbullying. Specific guidance was outlined in a detailed document written by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007a) called ‘Cyberbullying. Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools’. This document provides guidance for schools in taking pro-active measures to help prevent cyberbullying from occurring. It also outlines in detail a prevention framework made up of five essential action areas that together aim to offer a comprehensive and effective prevention plan. This prevention framework is also summarised in a shorter document called ‘Cyberbullying. A whole-school community issue’ (DCSF, 2007b) which is outlined in Appendix 2.

An additional document specific to cyberbullying that was published is the practical resource guide ‘Let's Fight It Together’ (Childnet International, 2007). This was written for the then DCSF by Childnet International (a non-profit organisation that promotes and educates parents, teachers and young people about safe and positive use of the Internet). This resource is primarily designed to help school staff equip students in secondary school with strategies to avoid, get out of, or help others get out of difficult or harmful cyber-interactions. It also gives staff advice on how to support young people in such situations.

Under the Education and Inspections Act (DCSF, 2006), the Labour government sought to strengthen teachers’ positions in relation to dealing with cyberbullying and gave headteachers the power “to such extent as is reasonable” to “regulate the conduct of students when they are off site” (p. 71). Other legal powers that relate directly to cyberbullying are also mentioned such as school staff having the powers to confiscate mobile phones from students when they are being used to cause a disturbance in class or otherwise breach the school behaviour/anti-bullying policy.
The Labour government also acknowledged that similar to children and young people, teaching staff may also become the targets of cyberbullying. In 2009, the DCSF published a document called ‘Cyberbullying: Supporting school staff’. This document offers advice to school staff about keeping themselves and their personal information safe. Current research into the frequency of cyberbullying and its impact on school staff is not extensive. However, in a 2012 study by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), 42% of teachers reported that an insulting comment, allegation of inappropriate behaviour with a student, or comment on their performance had been posted online or on a social networking site. Cross, Piggin, Douglas, Vonkaenel-Flatt and O’Brien (2012) carried out research on cyberbullying for the charity Beatbullying, they found that one-in-ten teachers reported experiencing harassment through a technological platform and nearly half had witnessed or knew of this type of harassment being directed against one of their colleagues.

2.7.2 Coalition government's educational policies on cyberbullying.

The coalition government was aware of the contribution cyberbullying makes to overall prevalence rates of bullying and made some developments in legislation, policy and practice relating to safeguarding children from bullying. The document ‘Cyberbullying: Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools’ (DCSF, 2007a) was replaced with a new document called ‘Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies’ (DfE, 2014). The document outlines the legal obligations and the powers that staff have to tackle bullying, and the principles, which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools. With regards to cyberbullying, this document also references cyberbullying as a specific area of bullying and even states that some types of cyberbullying are illegal under several laws, including Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. In fact, this document also seeks to give teachers more power in relation to dealing with all forms of bullying. It particularly refers to headteachers’ statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour that occurs outside of the school premises including dealing with student bullying in the community. This is of particular significance as cyberbullying quite often takes place out of school hours but which more often than not impacts very strongly on the school life of those students involved.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act (2011) give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyberbullying by providing a specific power to request a student to reveal a message or show other content on their mobile phone to establish if cyberbullying has occurred. Where the text or image is visible on the phone, staff are advised to act on this and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Furthermore, the
revised Children’s Services and Skills framework (Ofsted, 2012), includes ‘behaviour and safety’ as one of its key criteria for inspections. Under the new arrangements particular attention to how well a school manages students’ behaviour and attendance, and promotes and ensures student safety from non-cyber forms of bullying as well as cyberbullying and harassment became one of four key areas schools are to be judged on. It is expected that schools will be able to demonstrate the impact of anti-bullying policies and inspectors will particularly consider:

students’ behaviour towards, and respect for, other young people and adults, including freedom from bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability. (Ofsted, 2012, p. 38).

Thus, if school staff choose to ignore all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying they will be failing in the area of standards of behaviour and safety of an Ofsted inspection. In summary, government published documents and research literature indicate that cyberbullying is becoming a new and serious form of bullying that school staff as well as society need to address.

2.8 Prevalence rates of cyberbullying amongst young people

This section examines the primary findings from recent and major studies investigating the phenomenon of cyberbullying that have been carried out in the UK and internationally. It is important to highlight that even though some of the studies have included prevalence figures for being an agent of cyberbullying, this section will only focus on reporting the prevalence figures for those youngsters who have been on the receiving end of cyberbullying.

2.8.1 Cyberbullying prevalence rates within the United Kingdom.

Smith et al. (2008) describe findings from two different studies using the same questionnaire. The first study was deemed as a pilot study using a small sample of 92 students. The second study had a much larger sample of 533 students. The students in both studies were aged between 11 and 16 years. The questionnaire provided a statement about cyberbullying as
including at least one of seven media: text messaging, pictures/photos or video clips, phone calls, email, chat rooms, instant messaging and websites. Students were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale whether they had ever been cyberbullied. The response options were, 1 - in the last week or month, 2 - within the current school term, 3 - in the last school year, 4 - over a year ago or 5 - never. In the first study, the incidence of being cyberbullied was 22.2% with 6.6% of students experiencing it often and 15.6% of students experiencing it once or twice. The incidence of cyberbullying was slightly lower in the second study. A total of 17.2% of students had experienced cyberbullying. 5.3% indicated in the last week or month; 5.1% in the last term; 3.1% in the last school year and 3.1% over a year ago. The two most common media through which cyberbullying occurred were instant messaging and mobile phone calls.

Rivers and Noret (2010) included an analysis of longitudinal data in their five year study of 2,500 students. The study charted reports of nasty and threatening text and email messages received by students in Years 7 and 8 (11 - 13 years of age). Students were asked to indicate the frequency of their experiences using a six-point scale, 0 - never, 1 - only once or twice, 2 - occasionally this term, 3 - sometimes, 4 - regularly, once a week and 5 - frequently, several times a week. Results illustrated a rise in reports of students receiving one or more nasty or threatening text or email messages per term across five years with an average of 13% of students in 2002 rising to 16.4% in 2004 before gradually beginning to decline in 2005 and 2006. Reports of frequent receipt (once a week or more) of nasty text and email messages remained stable across the five years.

In the study carried out by Ackers (2012) the approach of using students as active researchers was developed. In this study, 12, Year 8 students were supported in developing and distributing a questionnaire on cyberbullying to 325 students across Years 7, 8 and 9 (11 - 14 years of age). Within the questionnaire a definition of cyberbullying was given as defined by, Smith et al. (2008), “cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (p. 376). The remainder of the questionnaire consisted of direct questions such as, “have you ever been cyberbullied?” Students responded by answering either yes or no. The findings revealed that 11% of students considered themselves to have been cyberbullied and 29% of students indicated that they had received an electronic message, which had made them feel bad, but they did not class it as cyberbullying. Information regarding students’ awareness of other youngsters’ experiences of being cyberbullied was also collected, 33% of the overall sample reported that they knew of somebody who had been cyberbullied.
The survey used in Cross, Piggin, et al’s. (2012) study encompassed the views of over 4,600 secondary school students. Detailed information about the questions the students were asked and the possible answer options available to them were not given. However, the findings from the survey revealed that 28% of students had experienced some form of cyberbullying. Nearly a quarter (23%) of those persistently cyberbullied stated it lasted for a year or more and 19% stated that it lasted for a period of months. Most of the cyberbullying incidents appeared to be Internet related with increased cyberbullying on Social Networking Sites (SNS).

2.8.2 International cyberbullying prevalence rates.

The study conducted by Genta et al. (2012) represents one of the few studies approaching the topic of cyberbullying with a specific focus on cross-cultural analysis. The DAPHNE-II Program 2004 - 2008 financed this project. The purpose of the DAPHNE-II program was to support organisations working to develop measures of investigation and instruments of action to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women. The study involved a total of 5,862 students, 1,964 students from Italy, 2,227 students from the UK and 1,671 students from Spain. The sample was approximately split equally between three age groups, students aged 12 years, 14 years and 16 years of age. The questionnaire gave a brief definition of cyberbullying and the following questions were then asked:

- Have you been bullied through mobile phone use in the last two months?
- Have you been bullied on the Internet in the last two months?

The response options for each were on a five-point scale, 1 - never, 2 - only once or twice, 3 - two or three times a month, 4 - about once a week and 5 - it happens several times a week. The responses, it only happened once or twice was defined as being occasional while two or three times a month or more frequently was defined as being severe. The percentages of cyberbullying arising from the data with respect to prevalence pointed mostly to occasional forms of mobile and Internet cyberbullying. In total 5.9% of students experienced being cyberbullied via a mobile phone (4.3% occasionally and 1.6% severely) and 7.1% indicated that they had been cyberbullied through the Internet (5.1% occasionally and 2% severely).

Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012) examined cyberbullying in 106 primary and secondary schools across Australia. A total of 7,418 students aged between 9 to 14 years were administered self-completion questionnaires. Students were asked whether in the previous school term had they experienced specific cyberbullying behaviours using particular media such as, being sent nasty messages on the Internet, or having mean or nasty comments or pictures being sent or posted
to social websites such as Facebook. The researchers found that 6.2% of students reported they were cyberbullied (repeatedly exposed – every few weeks or more often), whereas 23% of students reported being exposed to cyberbullying behaviours at least once in the last term. The most commonly reported behaviours were sending nasty messages via the Internet or to someone’s mobile phone and deliberately ignoring or leaving someone out.

Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk and Solomon (2010) conducted their research in Canada using a sample of 2,186 students aged between 11 to 13 and 15 to 17 years. In this study, a questionnaire was developed to examine prevalence and differential experience of cyberbullying amongst students. The questionnaire consisted of a series of questions about being the recipient of various online cyberbullying behaviours. Students were asked to report on the frequency of their experiences over the last 3 months answering never, once or twice or more than twice. Almost half of all the students (49.5%) indicated that they had experienced some form of cyberbullying in the last 3 months. Being called names was the most common form, accounting for 27% of cyberbullying incidents.

Tippett and Kwak (2012) carried out research in South Korea using an adapted form of the questionnaire used in Genta et al.’s (2012) study. In this study, 416 students aged between 12 and 15 years were asked had they experienced cyberbullying in the last two months via a mobile phone or the Internet. However, unlike the study by Genta et al. (2012) this questionnaire also asked students whether they had experienced cyberbullying in the last 2 months via online games. Approximately, 10% of all students reported having been bullied via a mobile phone. Of these, 77% had experienced it only once or twice, while 13% had been targeted once a week or more often. Students’ experiences of being cyberbullied via the Internet were the least prevalent at 6.3%. In terms of percentages, 73% had been targeted once or twice and 5% had been targeted once a week or more often. By far the most prevalent form of cyberbullying was through online games, with 43% of all students reporting that they had experienced this. Among these, 46% had been cyberbullied just once or twice and 30% had experienced cyberbullying on a regular basis, at least once a week or more often.

2.9 Difficulties associated with measuring cyberbullying

Tokunaga (2010) argues that clearly reporting the cyberbullying definition adopted in the research and the way it was operationalised is extremely relevant in the prospect of data interpretation and comparison. Although there has been a consistent focus across the research studies on the use of ICT to carry out cyberbullying, there is however tremendous variability in
the conceptualisation and measurement of what is broadly referred to as cyberbullying. Differences in the definition of cyberbullying adopted in the research questionnaires used is likely to have had an impact on how participants interpret and respond to questions which has probably led to the critical differences in the prevalence rates reported. Therefore, conclusions and the possibility of drawing meaningful cross-study comparisons are difficult.

For example, some questionnaires used by researchers such as Ackers (2012) have provided respondents with a brief definition of cyberbullying followed by a direct question such as: “Have you ever been cyberbullied?” It is likely that youngsters experience many different types of unpleasant cyber incidents and using a single construct is therefore quite limiting. Other researchers have provided a definition followed by questions relating to whether cyberbullying has been experienced via a specific electronic device or media. For instance, studies such as that of Genta et al. (2012) and Tippett and Kwak (2012) included a global definition of cyberbullying followed by specific questions relating to whether students’ involvement in cyberbullying had either been experienced or carried out via a mobile phone, the Internet or online games. In contrast, some questionnaires administered asked students whether they experienced or engaged in cyberbullying using particular media such as email, instant messaging, mobile phone text messages or mobile phone calls (Cross, Piggin, et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw, et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008). Rivers and Noret’s (2010) measurement of cyberbullying was limited to a single aspect, for instance cyberbullying via nasty or threatening text and/or email messages. However, considering the continuous progression in technological developments, it is expected that these types of categorisation will soon be outdated. The questionnaire used in the study conducted by Mishna et al. (2010) provided respondents with descriptions of specific cyberbullying behaviours. By widening the types of behaviours that cyberbullying comprise of, it is possible that participants from this study will have been more likely to report being cyberbullied because they had a better understanding on what behaviours may constitute cyberbullying.

2.10 Typology of cyberbullying

It seems there is a need for current and future research in the area of cyberbullying to ask participants more precise questions about the specific cyberbullying behaviours they have experienced. Similar to the study conducted by Mishna et al. (2010) just mentioned, an alternative to the limitations of past studies’ measurements of cyberbullying is to investigate forms of cyberbullying by looking at the actual actions, behaviours or tactics that are employed. In fact researchers are starting to make distinctions between the different cyberbullying behaviours which have led to a completely new typology or classification of cyberbullying.
behaviours being developed. Willard (2007), an attorney who is the director of the ‘Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use’ in the United States, provides the most quoted comprehensive categorisation of cyberbullying behaviours to date. This can be viewed below. Before reading this, the reader needs to be aware that variations in the terms used to describe these cyberbullying activities may be found in other literature. It is also important to highlight that these classifications are provisional because they are likely to vary in the future due to continuing technological advances.

### 2.10.1 Willard's (2007) categorisation of cyberbullying

#### Flaming

This is usually a short-lived argument in which messages containing forms of hostility, aggression, intimidation, insults, sarcasm, and the use of unfriendly tones and uninhibited language are sent between two or more youngsters (Turnage, 2008). Some characteristics of flaming messages can include: using all capital letters, excessive punctuation marks, and profanity. Flaming generally occurs in public communication environments such as a chat room, online gaming forum or blog. According to Wallace (1999), group polarisation can be quite high in the Internet community because within virtual settings it is easy to find someone with similar opinions. As a result, people may hold biased discussion and believe different opinions or attitudes deserve attacking. However, a series of private angry messages, sent via email or Instant messenger could also be considered as flaming.

#### Harassment

Contrary to flaming, harassment is repeated, ongoing sending of offensive messages to an individual target (Willard, 2007). These messages are usually sent through personal communication channels such as emails, instant messages, and mobile text messages. Harassment is longer-lived than flaming and the harm inflicted is usually one-sided, as one person is the perpetrator, while the other person wants the negative communication to cease.

#### Denigration (Put-downs)

Denigration takes place when harmful or untrue comments about another person are posted publically online or sent to others, the activity also includes spreading gossip and rumours. The purpose of denigration is usually to interfere with friendships or damage the reputation of an individual. The target of denigration may not be able to delete this information, because they do not always have access to the site where the wrongful information has been posted.
Cyberstalking

This is the repeated sending of harmful messages that include threats of harm, they are highly intimidating or extremely offensive and the recipient usually fears for their safety.

Masquerading/Impersonation

Masquerading or impersonation is the act of falsely identifying yourself as another person online and posting material that reflects badly on that person. Due to the inherent anonymity of the Internet, impersonation is relatively easy to engage in. It can be impossible to determine who has posted something and if the information is accurate. It is also possible to impersonate someone through chat rooms. The exchange of passwords, which is believed to be evidence of true friendship among teens, especially girls, allows impersonation to occur.

Outing/Trickery

Outing refers to sharing sensitive, private or embarrassing information or images about another person without their permission. The information can be passed on to other individuals through email, text messages, chat rooms, or the information can be posted on web pages or on blogs. Outing can occur in the context of a failed relationship in which one party distributes private information acquired while the relationship was still mutual. Trickery can also occur as part of outing. This is when an individual is purposely tricked into sharing private information and then that information is then shared with others without permission.

Exclusion/Ostracism

Exclusion and ostracism can take place through excluding, removing or blocking someone from ‘buddy’ lists, chat rooms, Internet groups, or gaming websites. For some teenagers exclusion from a ‘buddy’ list constitutes ultimate rejection.

As already mentioned, the ways in which young people communicate through electronic communications is continually changing and new words to describe cyberbullying behaviours are constantly emerging. New types of cyberbullying behaviours rarely discussed in past research on cyberbullying need to be acknowledged and are set out below.
2.11 Individual factors and susceptibility to cyberbullying

Previous research on non-cyber forms of bullying has identified some factors that make youngsters more susceptible to bullying. These are factors such as age, gender and academic ability. However, as yet, there is no clear evidence about how to profile an individual as a future target of unpleasant cyber incidents or cyberbullying.

2.11.1 Age and cyberbullying.

Primary school children are usually involved in more direct forms of bullying than relational bullying which fits in with the developmental explanation of bullying behaviour. Bjorkqvist, Osterman and Kaukiainen (1992) proposed that young children lack the essential verbal skills, which results in aggressive behaviour being predominantly physical in nature. As children grow up their verbal skills and more importantly, complex social skills start to develop. Thus, adolescents are more likely to demonstrate sophisticated styles of aggression such as indirect and relational aggression, which usually occur in secondary school. This type of aggression lends itself nicely to the types of bullying behaviours that occur in cyberspace and this is perhaps why a large majority of the research on cyberbullying has been targeted at groups of adolescents.

As one would expect, new technologies, the Internet and mobile phone use only appear to become an integral part of children's lives later on in their teenage years. For instance, Instant Messaging (IM) and Social Networking Sites (SNS) are popular and are predominantly used by teenagers for interpersonal communication as they are drawn to maintaining pre-existing friends as well as building new ones (Gross, 2004). Furthermore, as teenagers become older and more proficient with different technological devices and cyber environments, parents may be less vigilant and enforce fewer restrictions on their children's Internet use. Therefore, older teenagers may be at more risk of encountering unpleasant cyber incidents.

UK and international research reveal that the effects of age and experiences of cyberbullying differ. Mishna et al. (2010) concluded that older girls were more likely to be cyberbullied than older boys. The researchers also uncovered that older girls were significantly more likely to have been asked to do something sexual online or had private photographs distributed online without their consent whereas older boys were more likely to have been threatened online. Smith et al. (2008) noted older students experienced being cyberbullied (14% at Year 7, 19% at
Years 8 - 9, 26% at Years 10 - 11) but this was not statistically significant. However, older students were significantly more likely to have been cyberbullied via social websites.

The studies carried out by Tippett and Kwak (2012), Ackers (2012) and Rivers and Noret (2010) found no statistically significant age differences with regards to the cyberbullying experiences of young people. Although Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012) found the rate of being cyberbullied was slightly higher for secondary school students compared to primary school students but this was not statistically significant. The prevalence of being repeatedly cyberbullied ranged from 4.1% for students aged between 9 and 10 years to 7.5% in students aged between 14 and 15 years. With regards to being cyberbullied at least once in the previous term this ranged from 22.3% for students aged between 9 and 10 years to 24.1% for students aged between 14 and 15 years. Cross, Piggin, et al. (2012) did not examine any age differences in their research.

2.11.2 Gender and cyberbullying.

When gender differences are uncovered in non-cyber forms of bullying, males tend to engage in more physical and direct forms of aggression such as punching and kicking. Females in contrast are more likely to be implicated in less visible forms of bullying such as relational bullying which usually involves name calling or spreading gossip (Card, Stucky, Sawalani & Little, 2008; Monks & Smith, 2000). Given the findings in relation to non-cyber forms of bullying, it may be the case that females and males favour and are exposed to different forms of cyberbullying.

There are aspects of cyberbullying that are distinct from bullying in the real world which may be more appealing to females. For instance, cyberbullying differs because it relies on verbal, visual and written communication and physical strength and size are less relevant. In addition, cyberbullying behaviours can be carried out anonymously with less chance of being caught. Furthermore, communication media such as email, IM, SNS and text messaging are used frequently by females to maintain and strengthen relationships (Kowalski & Limber, 2007), and these forms of media are often employed in cyberbullying activities. All the above factors may place females at more risk of being involved in cyberbullying activities.

On the other hand, it is possible to record a physical attack or public humiliation of a person, using a mobile phone or Smartphone which is then circulated around for others to view. This is very similar to physical forms of bullying, which is mainly associated with males, and so this type of cyberbullying may be more appealing to males. A further type of cyberbullying that may be
more appealing to males is griefing. This involves players in online gaming, deliberately irritating and harassing other players within a game (Warner & Raiter, 2005).

UK and international research reveal that the effects of gender and experiences of cyberbullying vary. Some of the studies provide support for viewing gender as a significant predictor of cyberbullying victimisation. The analyses of contingency tables carried out by Rivers and Noret (2010) indicated that over a five year period, females were significantly more likely to receive nasty or threatening text or email messages than males. Between 2002 and 2006, reports of receiving nasty text and email messages rose from 18.8% to 20.8% for girls, whilst they dropped from 13.8% to 10.3% for boys. An exploratory analyses of the content of the text and email messages received, indicated that males received more hate-related messages, and that females were subject to more name-calling. The study conducted by Ackers (2012) found a statistically significant main effect for gender indicating that females, compared to males, (16% versus 8%) were more likely to be the target of cyberbullying. This result possibly accounts for why the females in this study were also significantly more likely than males to know somebody who had been cyberbullied. Cross, Piggin, et al. (2012) found that 32% of females experienced some form of cyberbullying, compared to 23% of males. However, the latter research findings appear to be based purely on the analysis of descriptive statistics as no statistical tests or significance levels were given in the literature. Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012) concluded that prevalence rates were higher for females than males (7% versus 5%) for repeatedly being cyberbullied and (28.3% versus 16.1%) for being cyberbullied at least once in the last term. Lastly, the research carried out by Mishna et al. (2010) concluded that older females were more likely to be cyberbullied than older boys. In addition, it emerged that the type of cyberbullying students experienced was also influenced by gender. Females in all grades were more likely to have been called names and had rumours spread about them.

Tippett and Kwak (2012) and Genta et al. (2012) used a questionnaire that was very similar, despite this the two studies had different findings with regards to which gender was most likely to have been cyberbullied via a mobile phone. The research by Tippett and Kwak (2012) revealed that males were more likely to have been targeted than females. These findings contrast with the results of Genta et al. (2012) who reported that among samples of Italian and Spanish students, females were significantly more likely to experience cyberbullying via a mobile phone than males. Tippett and Kwak (2012) also revealed that males were significantly more likely to have been the target of griefing. While there is an absence of previous research to compare this to, it could be argued that the culture of online games is more male-orientated and reflect stereotypically male competitive interests such as warfare, fighting and aggression (Diekman & Schneider, 2010). Therefore, within these aggressive online gaming forums, males may be at more risk of encountering cyberbullying. Finally, Smith et al. (2008) found no
significant gender differences for ever having been cyberbullied. This was also the case when looking at the different media through which cyberbullying occurred.

### 2.11.3 Academic achievement and cyberbullying.

Woods and Wolke (2004) uncovered a relationship between non-cyber forms of indirect, relational bullying and higher academic achievement. The researchers suggested that children who performed better academically were more likely to be the perpetrators of this type of bullying rather than the targets. Higher achievers were usually socially skilled individuals who used social manipulation and planned their torment towards others. Cyberbullying could be viewed similarly to non-cyber forms of indirect bullying. This is because cyberbullying is an indirect form of bullying, which relies heavily on the use of words to carry out behaviours such as spreading gossip to ruin people’s reputation or publically excluding and isolating others from certain online social groups.

There is now a more heightened awareness of the problem of vulnerable young people being bullied. According to the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA, 2013) evidence shows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are significantly more likely to be bullied or victimised than those who do not have any SEND. Between the years 2013 – 2015, the ABA along with key organisations embarked on a project to identify best practice in tackling SEND related bullying and to explore how schools can be best supported to address it. Yet the problem of bullying is constantly evolving, and one area that is causing new and potentially more serious problems for young people with SEND is cyberbullying.

Research investigating the association between students’ academic achievement and their experiences of being cyberbullied is virtually non-existent. To my knowledge there have only been three published research studies that have examined the experiences of cyberbullying amongst groups of students with a range of academic abilities (Cross, Piggin et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw et al., 2012; Huang & Chou, 2010). Huang and Chou (2010) conducted their study in Taiwan. In terms of academic achievement, no statistically significant difference was found between lower achieving and higher achieving students with respect to cyberbullying for students who were classified as bystanders, bullies, or targets. However, Huang and Chou (2010) pointed out that a possible reason for these findings is that Taiwan society is very academic test-oriented. Studying and academic performance play a huge part in teenagers’ lives and so most of the students that participated in the study reported that they were performing academically within average or above. The study by Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012) was
conducted in Australia. The findings revealed that low academic achieving students attending schools where the majority of students were low achievers were less likely to have been cyberbullied than the high academic achieving students in these schools. A possible explanation for this finding given by the researchers is, students attending these schools were likely to have resided in lower social economic status areas and perhaps had less access to technology and exposure to cyberbullying. Another possible explanation is that because high achieving students were the minority they may have been targeted by the low achieving students for being so-called ‘good students’. Lastly, Cross, Piggin et al’s. (2012) study conducted in the UK found that those youngsters who reported having SEND were 12% more likely to have experienced cyberbullying than those who did not.

It is important to note, that the studies conducted by Huang and Chou (2010) and Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012) requested the students to indicate whether they performed academically better than, about the same or not as well as most students in their Year group which ultimately relies on some degree of honesty. Furthermore, the findings from these two studies must be interpreted with caution, as there are significant differences between the educational cultures of Taiwan, Australia and the UK. The ‘Virtual Violence II’ report written by Cross, Piggin et al. (2012) did not state how information about students’ academic ability was obtained.

2.12 Unpleasant cyber incidents versus cyberbullying

It is important to point out that the main body of research literature on cyberbullying tends to be written from the perspective of the adult, the focus usually being on how adults understand the issue and what they perceive cyberbullying to be. Young people may indicate that they have experienced negative interactions in cyber space but does this really constitute cyberbullying? This is a significant question given that there is evidence to suggest that behaviours considered as cyberbullying by researchers are not always considered as cyberbullying by young people. It is possible that adults may not fully recognise or understand the cyber interactions that occur between young people.

In cyberspace it is common place for many adolescents do and say things that they would never consider face to face in an offline situation. Adults are likely to view young people’s cyber communications as provocative and insulting and interpret them as shocking or hurtful. However, many adolescents trivialise or become desensitised to the coarse language used in cyber space because it is used amongst them regularly (Katz, 2012). Furthermore, immediately endorsing the label ‘cyberbullying’ in questionnaires might have narrow connotations. It is
possible that some young people may struggle emotionally to identify themselves as targets of cyberbullying as this may leave them feeling disempowered or humiliated. Rather than recognising vicious comments as cyberbullying many youngsters may prefer to downplay the incidents by labelling the hurtful words or actions as ‘drama’. MacKay (2012) stated that this defence mechanism has become a convenient way of shielding oneself from any intentional malice.

A final point to consider is that one off or infrequent unpleasant cyber communications that occur between young people may not normally constitute cyberbullying. Granted some young people may be angry or upset about it at the time but most individuals may be able to quickly move on and forget about it. Indeed, while the majority of researchers have agreed upon definitions that include the repeated nature of the behaviour, in reporting their findings they have often opted to include one off or infrequent incidents as well as multiple incidents (Ackers, 2012; Mishna et al., 2010; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). Whereas, other researchers such as; Genta et al. (2012) and Tippet and Kwak (2012) have reported on the intensity of students experiences of cyberbullying either as occasional (once or twice) or severe (2 or 3 times a month). It is important to highlight these differences as research findings may include single incidents as well as multiple incidents of cyberbullying, which is likely to affect the validity of reported prevalence rates of cyberbullying.

Essentially then, the cyberbullying rates reported in research studies may actually be misleading. The reasons for this are; some youngsters may be hardened and not interpret unpleasant cyber interactions as cyberbullying. Others may be reluctant and embarrassed to admit to having been cyberbullied and lastly, referring to one off incidents as cyberbullying is likely to be inappropriate. To overcome some of these difficulties, rather than report on youngsters’ cyberbullying experiences it may in fact be more appropriate for researchers to initially report on youngsters’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents, as interpreting all forms of unpleasant cyber communications under the umbrella term of cyberbullying is likely to be inaccurate. The use of the term unpleasant cyber incident along with specific descriptions of the different types of unpleasant cyber interactions young people encounter may encourage young people to respond to questions more honestly. Information regarding the prevalence of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by young people is just as important as reporting on the prevalence of cyberbullying as it can serve as an early warning system. Knowledge about the prevalence and different types of unpleasant cyber interactions that occur between adolescents may help shape e-safety work and inform prevention and response strategies. Nonetheless, uncovering actual cyberbullying prevalence rates are still important but may be fraught with more difficulties than obtaining data on young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. Ultimately, there is a reliance on respondents self-identifying as having been
cyberbullied, despite this, questionnaires used in research should still attempt to obtain this information.

2.13 The co-occurrence of cyberbullying and non-cyber bullying.

Li (2007) rather than consider cyberbullying as a completely separate phenomenon to non-cyber forms of bullying proposes that it is “a new bottle but old wine” (p. 1777). This expression implies that bullying that occurs in cyberspace is an extension of the bullying carried out in the real world. In other words youngsters who are the targets of cyberbullying will know their aggressors and are usually the targets of bullying in real life and cyberspace. Cyberspace as a venue is just a new playground for those youngsters carrying out the bullying. The latter suggestion of contiguity between cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying seems to be confirmed by (Cross, Piggin, et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw, et al., 2012; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). The results of these investigations seem to highlight the co-occurrence between both forms of bullying phenomena. However, it is extremely difficult to determine whether non-cyber forms of bullying causes cyberbullying or vice versa.

Smith et al. (2008) found that, students who had experienced non-cyber forms of bullying were significantly more likely to experience cyberbullying and were also more likely to engage in carrying out cyberbullying behaviours. It seems that adolescents that are bullied in real life could be using the anonymity guaranteed by technology to counter-attack. This finding may provide evidence for the existence of the ‘Vengeful Angel’ cyberbully proposed by Aftab (2006). The ‘Vengeful Angel’ cyberbully is someone who is usually angry at having been the target of cyber/non-cyber forms of bullying and feel they are taking warranted revenge.

Similarly, students who carried out cyberbullying behaviours were also more likely to be agents of bullying in the real world. In the case of males, Rivers and Noret (2010) suggested that males who engage in non-cyber forms of bullying extend existing threats of direct physical attack to online forms of bullying. In the case of females, the sending of nasty or threatening text or email messages is an extension of existing manipulation of peer relationships in order to ensure that unpopular females remain unpopular and are further excluded from the peer group. Cross, Piggin, et al. (2012) provided an interesting insight into where the cyberbullying may originate. Within the total sample of students who had experienced cyberbullying, 20% indicated that their experience was an extension of face-to-face bullying, with 27% reporting that the bullying that they had experienced had actually started online. Lastly, Cross, Shaw, et al. (2012), found that of those students who were cyberbullied, 87% reported also being bullied offline, with only 13%
being cyberbullied only. Likewise of those who reported cyberbullying others, most (77%) also carried out non-cyber bullying behaviours.

Still, it is important to point out that none of the above studies found that 100% of youngsters who were cyberbullied were also bullied in real life. Therefore, there is no confirming evidence to prove that cyberbullying is just old wine in new bottles as suggested by Li (2007). Thus, in some cases, it seems that cyberbullying may indeed be a new method of bullying. It is, therefore, important to study the relationship between those youngsters who have been the target of unpleasant cyber incidents and their aggressor in more detail. A crucial question to be answered is, whether the identity of the person(s) targeting them in cyberspace is known? The reason for this is because one of the unique factors associated with cyberbullying is that youngsters who carry out cyberbullying behaviours may hide behind some measure of anonymity. To uncover whether anonymity is a common aspect in cyberbullying it is worth investigating whether recipients of unpleasant cyber incidents or cyberbullying actually know the identity of their aggressor(s).

If their identity is known a further area worth exploring is whether those responsible for carrying out cyberbullying behaviours are also responsible for carrying out non-cyber forms of bullying type behaviours towards them in real life? If the co-occurrence of cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying does not exist it would imply that the recipients and aggressors of both forms of bullying have different characteristics, the causes and consequences would be different and as a result, new and different methods for prevention and intervention are likely to be needed. If on the other hand, cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying involved the same group of people then the arising consequences would be quite different. In terms of prevention and intervention work school staff could use the excellent knowledge that has been gained about non-cyber forms of bullying and transfer some of this to cyberbullying. So, particularly with regard to further research, can the hypothesis of a “new bottle but old wine” be empirically confirmed, or not (Li, 2007, p. 1777).
2.14 Reporting incidents of cyberbullying to staff in school

Youngsters have the option to respond to the challenge of both online and offline bullying by seeking help. Help-seeking has been described as a coping method for dealing with conflict and distressing events (Wilson & Deane, 2000). It involves confiding in someone about a problem with the aim of obtaining advice or support required to resolve or alleviate the concern. Help-seeking is a multi-step process of decisions. The first step is acknowledging a situation as problematic (Saunders, 1990; Srebnik, Cauce & Baydar, 1996). Most bullying situations are subjectively classified as problematic based on an individual’s past experiences and cognitive schemas and perceptions about the severity and the degree of the problem also predict help-seeking (Boldero & Fallon, 1995). Also, a young person’s demographic characteristics (i.e., Year group, gender, family composition and location of residency) may further impact on their willingness to seek help (Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004). Finally, distinct from recognising the situation as problematic, youngsters must also decide that seeking help would be an appropriate way to solve the problem (Saunders, 1990). The second step in the process is deciding to seek support (Srebnik et al., 1996). Help-seeking most often occurs when the associated costs of help-seeking are judged to be low (Gross & McMullen, 1983). With respect to bullying, Coloroso (2002) indicated that feelings of shame, fear of retaliation, beliefs that individuals will not help them, and that bullying is a normal part of adolescence, usually deter youngsters from seeking help. The final step in the help-seeking process is accessing help from people (Gross & McMullen, 1983; Srebnik et al., 1996).

Seemingly, one of the challenges in addressing any form of bullying is encouraging students to seek help. With regards to the guidance and advice set out in the ‘LA Anti-bullying Strategy’ (2013) document, ensuring that children and young people report any form of bullying incidents is one of the aspirations within the LA anti-bullying mission statement which states, “we aim to reduce the frequency of bullying incidents and to increase the likelihood that incidents are disclosed to responsible adults” (p. 3). Therefore, an important question to consider as part of this research is, if youngsters are being cyberbullied are they actually seeking support and if so from whom? Regrettably, the youngsters from the real-life accounts of cyberbullying incidents described in Section 1.1 did not seek help from their parents or school staff. The implication was these youngsters exhibited some worrisome behaviour in school, and the teachers were unaware of the source or trigger of their behaviour.

Presently, much of the research on cyberbullying has followed a similar pattern, whereby many students do not report the cyberbullying incidents that they encounter. Holfeld and Grabe (2012) found 29% of 383 students with the average age of 13.5 years who were cyberbullied did not
report the incident to anyone. This is consistent with the previous research of Cassidy, Jackson and Brown (2009), they asked 365 students aged 11 to 15 years if cyberbullying did occur, to whom would they report or entrust this information. Their analysis of the data determined that 25% of students indicated that they would tell no-one. Whilst most anti-bullying policies in schools advocate that students who are being bullied should seek help from teachers, it seems that the stark reality is many are reluctant to do so. Cassidy et al. (2009) found that participants who were or (could be) recipients of cyberbullying were almost equally split (47% versus 42%) on whether or not they would confide in a member of staff at school. In contrast 74% indicated that they would tell a friend.

Young people appear to have a negative or critical attitude in terms of the support that adults can offer them if they are being cyberbullied. According to Holfeld and Grabe (2012) some of the primary reasons young people choose not to report cyberbullying are, they feel like they can handle it on their own (57%) and telling would make things worse (29%). Using focus group interviews, Mishna, Saini and Solomon. (2009) elicited the views of thirty eight 10 to 14 year olds on cyberbullying. Participants concurred that students do not tell their parents or other adults about experiences of cyberbullying. They unanimously depicted adults as oblivious to the cyberworld and to the phenomenon of cyberbullying. As one student stated “parents and other adults don’t get how it is nowadays” (p. 1225). If students are consistently failing to report cyberbullying incidents to teachers then the seriousness of cyberbullying may be underestimated and teachers will be unable to take the appropriate actions to address this phenomenon.

2.15 The challenges school staff experience in addressing cyberbullying

It is important to highlight that some individual staff members in schools may view responding to cyberbullying as an arduous task. Unlike non-cyber forms of bullying, cyberbullying entails many new complexities and unique challenges some of which are discussed in detail below.

2.15.1 Level of knowledge and skills staff possess in order to intervene.

The reality is that as technology continues to advance so too will the diverse applications and typologies of cyberbullying. Teachers’ indifference or lack of up-to-date knowledge about cyberbullying may lead to policy deficiencies or inadequate prevention strategies (Huang & Chou, 2010). However, it is important to highlight that having policies in place does not necessarily mean that school staff will have the confidence and knowledge of how best to
respond to cyberbullying (Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa, 2008). Unfortunately, responding to and taking action against cyberbullying is not without complications. There is often hesitation in intervening or taking action because investigating incidents of cyberbullying is viewed as time consuming and a challenge by some teachers (DCSF, 2007a; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Both Li (2008) and Yilmaz (2010) investigated how trainee teachers viewed cyberbullying and how confident they felt in their knowledge and skills to take actions to minimise the negative effects of cyberbullying on students’ lives. Half of the trainee teachers in Yilmaz’s (2010) Turkish study and almost the majority of the trainee teachers in Li’s (2008) Canadian study did not consider themselves as having adequate knowledge and skills in identifying and managing cyberbullying.

Bauman, Rigby and Hoppa (2008) found that counsellors, rather than teachers, were more likely to engage in bullying interventions, primarily because they were trained in intervention methods. According to Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010), “…the gap between what teachers know and what they do relates to their confidence, or self-efficacy, for performing the task successfully” (p. 269). With this in mind, it is imperative that school staff: (a) keep up-to-date with the ever changing trends and patterns of young people’s misuse of technology; (b) ensure that e-safety lessons and school cyberbullying policies are continuously reviewed and refined; and (c) have knowledge and understanding of the current government policies and legal and educational boundaries for the management of cyberbullying incidents.

2.15.2 Recognising cyberbullying as a serious issue.

A further consideration to take into account is that school staff, based on their own perceptions of non-cyber forms of bullying, may not recognise cyberbullying as a real threat or serious issue. This is because non-cyber forms of bullying is deemed an age-old societal problem which most adults will have either witnessed, experienced and/or initiated when they were younger. However, many adults will not have had any personal experiences of cyberbullying. In fact, Shariff (2009) argued that many adults in schools and the surrounding communities do not understand the complexities of cyberbullying or the possible ramifications if it is not addressed properly. Li’s (2008) study reported that trainee teachers did not see cyberbullying as a problem in schools nor were they concerned about it. Other research has found that teachers are more likely to intervene when they witness overt types of bullying behaviours, which are more easily identifiable such as physical aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). This type of bullying behaviour often triggers serious disciplinary actions, such as exclusion (Hutchinson, 2013).

In addition to this lack of understanding of the problem, many adults lack understanding of how the Internet is an integral part of the lives of young people. While the Internet has changed the lives of adults, this is not the case for the children and young people of today. Children born
after 1980 are considered to be ‘digital natives’ (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p. 239). The digital native has had access to networked digital technologies from the very beginning, and are proficient at using them. The rest of the population are considered to be ‘digital immigrants’. According to Palfrey and Gasser (2008, p. 346) the digital immigrant is, “a person who adopted the internet and other digital tools effectively”. It is this distinction that creates additional difficulties for the older generations that are charged with producing policies and guidelines to protect children and young people from cyberbullying (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008)

### 2.15.3 Time factors.

Dealing with incidents of cyberbullying can be time consuming and costly. Cross, Piggin, et al. (2012) reported that on average those teachers responsible for investigating cyberbullying incidents are spending six hours per week dealing with such cases. The majority of time seems to be spent dealing with the repercussions in terms of managing behaviour and investigating reported incidents. Thus, in order for school staff to acquire the confidence and skills to more readily take action against cyberbullying, they may possibly require further training, the aim of which would be to develop their competence in:

- successfully detecting and tracing cyberbullying incidents;
- accurately assessing its intent to harm;
- evaluating how damaging the cyberbullying has been for the recipient; and
- possessing the knowledge of how to remove offensive material.

### 2.15.4 The occurrence of cyberbullying away from school premises.

Another dilemma for school staff is determining who actually has authority in dealing with this serious issue. For instance, a vast amount of negative communication between young people in cyberspace may occur outside of school hours which make it difficult, if not impossible for school staff to supervise (Smith et al., 2008). Regrettably, the repercussions of these negative cyber communications frequently make their way back into school and cause significant disruption to the school day. Unsurprisingly, many teachers feel uncertain with regards to the boundaries of their responsibility and are often unsure about; (a) the extent to which they are expected to intervene and (b) the amount of power they have to regulate the conduct of students when they are off site. Factors such as these may either, prevent staff from intervening
or force staff to take impulsive and often impromptu action, which results in many cyberbullying incidents not being effectively dealt with (Brown et al., 2006).

### 2.15.5 The involvement of ‘accessories’.

As discussed earlier in Section 2.6.1 a further challenge cyberbullying poses is that it often attracts a wide audience. Children and young people not directly involved in the initial cyberbullying might unwittingly become active participants and have been termed ‘accessories’ (DCSF, 2007a, p. 26). These ‘accessories’ may go on to circulate or show others images or messages that are designed to humiliate. Sadly, their involvement often compounds the misery of the person being targeted. In this situation, a major challenge for school staff is deciding exactly who should be held accountable and what sanctions if any should be imposed on those held responsible.

### 2.15.6 Changes in Government and policies.

Lastly, over the years, previous and current governments have made attempts to acknowledge the growing concerns that school staff face with regards to cyberbullying. Steps have been taken to update and reform policy as well as publish documents concerning young people’s and even teachers’ use of ICT. However, frequent modifications to existing policies and the publication of new government documents is likely to create further confusion as well as add to the difficulties that school staff already face in keeping up-to-date with changes in information and advice around safeguarding children and young people.

### 2.16 Promoting the reporting of cyberbullying

The DfE, (2014) document ‘Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies’ clearly states that successful schools should, support students in reporting bullying and assure them that they will be listened to and incidents will be dealt with. With regards to cyberbullying, it particularly refers to the following, “students should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyberbullying” (DfE, 2014, p. 6). The objective of making the reporting of cyberbullying to staff easier for young people is also one of the five action points from the cyberbullying prevention framework set out in the document ‘Cyberbullying. Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools’ (DCSF,
Finally, from a LA point of view ensuring that children and young people report any form of bullying incident is one of the aspirations within the LA anti-bullying mission statement.

It could be assumed, that school reporting methods might be more orientated towards non-cyber forms of bullying rather than cyberbullying? In fact, in the study carried out by Cross, Piggin, et al. (2012), 46% of young people aged 11 to 16 years old called for better cyberbullying reporting mechanisms in schools. If students are not happy with current reporting routes they will be reluctant to seek help from teachers and will become adept at hiding cyberbullying incidents from them. Therefore, bullying incidents are likely to go undetected and unresolved leaving some youngsters feeling vulnerable and unsafe. When the findings from this study revealed that students within the LA were also opting not to report cyberbullying incidents to teachers this, in the researcher’s opinion, was extremely worrying and indicated that the aspiration of the LA anti-bullying mission statement was not being fulfilled. In this case seeking youngsters’ views on factors that might increase reporting among students would be an extremely relevant area to investigate.

Interestingly, the few researchers that have touched upon this area have centred on non-cyber forms of bullying and have usually analysed quantitative data focusing on pre-determined factors such as chronicity and type of bullying, school climate, family context, and demographic characteristics (Unnever & Cornell, 2004; Williams & Cornell, 2006). To the researcher’s knowledge, obtaining youngsters’ views on what specific actions might be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to school staff is non-existent. The answers to this question would offer an original contribution to the research in this area. More importantly, students’ ideas and views could be disseminated to staff on school leadership teams who would hopefully be inclined to take the appropriate course of action to support youngsters in reporting cyberbullying. Eliciting students’ views might also help staff acknowledge that a distinct approach for cyberbullying may be required and anti-bullying policies and practices may need to be modified accordingly.

2.17 Summary

The aforementioned literature review has provided a tailored overview of the pertinent research relevant to the topic of this thesis. Information on the specificity and complexity of cyberbullying has been outlined and the methodological limitations of previous research and gaps in knowledge have been highlighted. This has enabled the researcher to consider how the current research study should extend and build upon the limitations of past research.
As discussed earlier in Section 2.9 there is tremendous variability in the conceptualisation and measurement of what is broadly referred to as cyberbullying which greatly impacts on the precision of cyberbullying prevalence rates. Furthermore, the content of Section 2.12 states that research literature on cyberbullying tends to be written from the perspective of the adult, the focus usually being on how adults understand the issue and what they perceive cyberbullying to be. Therefore, reporting all students’ experiences, including one off incidents of cyberbullying under the umbrella term of ‘cyberbullying’ will affect the accuracy of cyberbullying prevalence rates. In an attempt to improve the accuracy of cyberbullying prevalence rates, this study made a clear distinction between: (a) the prevalence of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents; and (b) the prevalence of young people’s perceptions of being cyberbullied. As far as the researcher is aware, the distinction between any experience of cybernastiness and true cyberbullying has only been pointed out by one other researcher. Katz (2012) found that 49% of 9,290 respondents to an online survey had experienced at least one of the common forms of online aggression described. In contrast a much lower percentage (19%) considered their experience to be cyberbullying.

2.18 Aims of the study

This study aims to build upon the limitations of previous studies on cyberbullying. In an attempt to improve the accuracy of cyberbullying prevalence rates, this study makes a clear distinction between (a) the prevalence of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents and (b) the prevalence of young people’s perceptions of being cyberbullied. In order to gather data on: (a) the prevalence of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents, students were asked to indicate which out of ten different types/forms of cyber incidents they had experienced. Some of these behaviours were based upon the classification of cyberbullying behaviours developed by Willard (2007) (see Section 2.10.1). Only further on in the questionnaire the term cyberbullying was used. To investigate (b) the prevalence of young people’s perceptions of being cyberbullied, respondents were given a definition of cyberbullying and were asked to indicate whether they perceived themselves as having been the target of cyberbullying. To find out more in-depth information about the nature and extent of secondary school students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber interactions, additional information was obtained such as; the frequency that unpleasant cyber incidents occurred, the media through which these incidents were encountered, whether the identity of the person carrying out the cyberbullying behaviours was known along with to whom students might be reporting these incidents.

As yet there is no clear evidence about how to profile an individual as a future target of unpleasant cyber incidents or cyberbullying. The majority of research studies have limited the
focus to investigating the effects of age and gender. So far the research findings have been inconclusive. This study aims to widen the focus beyond just the effects of age and gender by examining the effects of other factors including Smartphone ownership and academic achievement. Including the effects of Smartphone ownership aims to reflect the increasing sophistication of the technologies now in use. It is important for research on cyberbullying to sustain its knowledge of the new technologies that are constantly emerging along with the change in young people’s use of ICT. If this does not occur then interventions and policies on cyberbullying will most likely become out of date and restricted in application potential (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007). With regards to academic ability, only three studies that the researcher is aware of have opted to explore the associations between academic ability and young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents or cyberbullying (Cross, Piggin, et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw, et al., 2012; Huang & Chou, 2010). A major limitation of which was the fact that the researchers relied on students’ honesty in reporting how they performed academically in school. This study aims to build upon this limitation by obtaining information about students’ academic abilities from school assessment records.

To investigate which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents, the effects of: (1) age; (2) gender; (3) academic ability; (4) ownership of a Smartphone; (5) whether Internet use is restricted by caregivers; and (6) the number of hours students spent each week socialising online were analysed. To investigate which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied, the effects of; (1) age, (2) gender (3) academic ability (4) frequency with which the unpleasant cyber incident(s) occurred and (5) the emotional response experienced when an unpleasant cyber incident was encountered were analysed. Understanding the influence of such factors could lend important insights into knowing amongst which groups of young people these unpleasant interactions are most likely to surface. This in turn could provide suggestions of where cyberbullying prevention work and e-safety work should be targeted to achieve the most effectual responses (Tokunaga, 2010). Another important point to highlight is the fact that the study was conducted within a LA where a lot of youngsters live in economically disadvantaged families. Thus, the findings from the research should also be able to reveal whether the risk of experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents extends to those youngsters living in more socially deprived areas of England.

As discussed previously in Section 2.14 a large percentage of young people have a negative or critical attitude in terms of the level of support school staff can offer them if they are being cyberbullied (Cassidy et al., 2009; Holfeld & Grabe, 2012; Mishna, et al., 2009). It is apparent from the literature review that the available research on cyberbullying has neglected to consider the importance of obtaining young people’s views on what actions need to be mobilised in schools to make the reporting of cyberbullying to school staff easier and more worthwhile for
students. The current research will therefore make a unique contribution to knowledge in this area by providing opportunities for groups of young people to be engaged in a structured focus group discussion in which possible solutions and ideas about how to address the issue of low reporting rates of unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff might be generated.

A final point to highlight is that previous research findings on cyberbullying have been mainly quantitatively analysed. Livingstone and Haddon (2008) argue that “less research on cyberbullying is qualitative or multi-method in nature, so we have less knowledge of children’s own experiences or perceptions, or of the ways in which online activities are contextualized within their everyday lives” (p. 317). The current research sets out to remedy this limitation by combining quantitative and qualitative methodology using a mixed methods approach. This will hopefully bring about an improved understanding of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents as well as identify any potential facilitators that can be implemented to support young people in coming forward to report incidents of cyberbullying.
The study will address the following research questions (RQs):

**RQ1**: What are students’ experiences of using ICT?

**RQ2a**: What is the prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students?

**RQ2b**: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?

**RQ3**: Do those students who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?

**RQ4a**: How many students self-identify as having been the target of cyberbullying?

**RQ4b**: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

**RQ5**: When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do young people go to confide in and seek help?

**RQ6**: What are students’ ideas and views about what actions need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff?

The subsequent chapter provides the methodology that was used to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter outline

The methodology chapter consists of four parts. The first part of this chapter outlines the philosophical position within which the research is based, including a discussion about the ontological, epistemological and axiological considerations that informed the methodology and general approach. A discussion of the mixed methods research design that best addresses the research questions is also outlined. The second and third parts of the chapter describe the stages and processes involved during phase 1 and phase 2 of the study. Data collection, data analysis and the limitations of methods employed in each of the phases are also discussed. The fourth and final part of the chapter considers ethical principles and the chapter concludes with a detailed operational risk analysis.

3.2 Philosophical position

Theoretical and philosophical assumptions about science, knowledge, truth and evidence are all influential in the design of psychological research and the manner in which it proceeds. These implicit theoretical and philosophical assumptions that an individual subscribes to consequently go on to inform the methodology that is implemented (Forrester, 2010). Therefore, in the design of psychological research it is important to make explicit these implicit assumptions so as to understand the thought processes concerning the key decisions that are made in research, particularly during the process of adopting a certain methodology.

3.2.1 Ontology and epistemology.

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being. Ontology asks questions concerning what exists in the world. It predominantly relates to issues about what people believe to be real and what they believe to exist in the world (Forrester, 2010). Ontological positions can be broadly viewed as realist or relativist. At the ontological level, realists assume that there exists a single reality that is objectively given and is measurable using properties that are independent of the researcher. In other words, knowledge is objective and generalisable. In contrast, a relativist ontological stance places a much greater emphasis upon the way in which the world is socially constructed and understood (Blaikie, 2000). It attempts to make sense of, or to
interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A diverse range of interpretations can be applied to entities that exist within the world, and all are deemed as equally valid.

On the other hand, epistemology refers to a branch of philosophy that pertains to questions about knowledge, beliefs and truths. It asks questions about how knowledge is understood and focuses on our means for acquiring knowledge. The epistemological stance adopted in realist research usually differs from that adopted in relativist research. Quantitative approaches that incorporate standardised measures and statistical techniques are primarily associated with a realist paradigm. Quantitative approaches, allow for the broader applicability of observed patterns in data. However, the context of the study or experiment is ignored as are the researcher's views or preconceptions, which have little or no meaning within the context of the individuals, society or culture being studied. On the other hand qualitative approaches based on non-numerical narratives are usually associated with the relativist paradigm. Qualitative approaches provide richness, depth, density and the contextual embedding of data. Unlike quantitative researchers, the researcher of a study using qualitative research is heavily involved in the process, which gives the researcher a subjective view of the study and its participants which may skew the data gathered.

3.2.2 Critical realism.

Bearing in mind the need to position one’s self within a philosophical paradigm guided by an ontological and epistemological view, the research within this thesis is positioned within a critical realist position (Bhaskar, 2008). This was prompted by the researcher’s general philosophical view of the world and its applicability to the research completed here, e.g. social research. Critical realism provided a balanced position in terms of the value of knowledge obtained here in relation to whether it represented reality. This ontology recognises the existence of an objective reality formed of both events and underlying causes, and although these dimensions of reality have objective existence, they are not wholly discoverable. Knowledge can only be imperfectly obtained because of flawed intellectual mechanisms including limited cognitive and linguistic capacity, which operate based on current knowledge and methods (Bhaskar, 2008). As time progresses and new developments occur, this knowledge and understanding can fundamentally change and is susceptible to critique (Scott, 2005). In critical realism, the ultimate goal of research is to develop deeper levels of explanation and understanding. It does not seek to derive generalisable laws or identify beliefs and experiences of social beings (McEvoy, 2006).
When applying critical realism to this particular study there will be numerous ‘units of knowledge’ emerging from the data generated by the questionnaires and the focus group discussions. The different types of data will not exist as standalone observable facts, they will be context specific and influenced by my own perceptions and approaches. In adopting a critical realist position, the researcher is aware of some of the limitations of the research design in terms of generalisibility and the conclusions that can be drawn. Positioning the research within this critical realist position prompted the use of a mixed methods design. A quantitative method of gathering data was used to explore the prevalence and extent of students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents during phase 1 of the study. In contrast, during phase 2 of the study a qualitative method of gathering data was used to expand on an interesting finding which arose from the analyses of the data captured from phase 1 of the study. The sole purpose of using mixed methods was to develop a deeper level of understanding and knowledge about experiences of cyberbullying amongst young people. Utilising opposing methods which are typically used within different paradigms allows the methods to complement each other providing additive outcome (Creswell et al., 2003).

3.2.3 Axiological position of the researcher.

There are some research topics such as cyberbullying which, by their very nature, are likely to arouse strong emotions. Therefore it is difficult to see how research can be approached in a value free way. Axiological decisions guide all facets of research, including the selection of the research topic and the approach taken towards research. Heron (1996) argues that researchers demonstrate axiological skill by being able to articulate how their values shape what they research and how they go about conducting the research including how findings are interpreted and conclusions reported. The researcher acknowledges that she brings her own individual perceptions, feelings, positions and principles to the research on cyberbullying. Thus, it is important that researchers acknowledge and are explicit about their underlying beliefs, assumptions and preconceptions. An interesting idea which comes from Heron’s (1996) discussion of axiology is the possibility of the researcher writing their own statement of personal and professional values in relation to the topic being studied. This would, for example, heighten the researcher’s awareness of how his or her own motives and beliefs may have influenced the development of the research project and how the value judgements made in drawing conclusions from the data may be different from those drawn by researchers with other values. The researcher’s axiological position in relation to this particular research area and the five values that underpin this work will now be outlined.
1. All children and young people have the right to develop their self-esteem and confidence, feel safe from threats of harm or ridicule, be secure and experience a sense of belonging among their social groups. If young people are experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents and/or cyberbullying the associated implication is, their basic levels of need such as, ‘security needs’ and ‘love and belonging needs’ (Maslow, 1954) are not being met. Cyberbullying is not as visible as non-cyber forms of bullying and some staff in schools may assume that it is not an issue. The collection of quantitative data generated from the questionnaires is intended to provide the LA anti-bullying strategy group and the school’s leadership team with data on the prevalence of cyberbullying amongst students and the possible repercussions. This quantitative strand of the study will be the first significant step in raising awareness of the extent of the problem of cyberbullying amongst a selection of students from one secondary school within the LA. It will also contribute to meeting the objectives of strand 1 of the LA anti-bullying action plan (the five strands of the LA anti-bullying action plan can be found in Appendix 1).

2. Advances in ICT bring about continual changes in cyberbullying behaviours. For example, students’ increased ownership of Smartphones raises further challenges for keeping children and young people safe online and offline. Thus, there is a need for government, LAs, staff, parents and students to keep up with the rapid developments in ICT. This should be reflected in e-safety lessons as well as in government, LA and school anti-bullying policies. Along with this, there ought to be routine evaluations on the impact of e-safety education that students receive in schools. An annual administration of a questionnaire to students similar to the one used in the quantitative phase of the research study could be a useful tool in measuring the effectiveness of e-safety work. It would also assist in meeting the objectives of strand 1 of the LA anti-bullying action plan. The data would provide the LA with an annual record of cyberbullying incidents experienced by students which would have the potential to inform future LA planning for anti-bullying work.

3. It is important that every child has the right to achieve the five outcomes as set out in the Every Child Matters framework (DfES, 2004). Particularly ‘staying safe’ in that children and young people are safe from all forms of bullying and discrimination, and ‘making a positive contribution’, which aims to ensure that children and young people develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate. Creating a safe environment for students cannot be achieved unless the issue of all forms of bullying is effectively addressed. In order to affect change, leadership teams in schools ought to promote a strong commitment to preventing and tackling all forms of bullying. The researcher’s role as an EP in schools as well as her research interest mean she is strategically placed to disseminate and support the promotion of the LA anti-bullying policy and action plan to members of school leadership teams. This will help meet the objectives of strand 2 of the LA anti-bullying action plan (see Appendix 1).
The success of any anti-bullying programme depends on a proactive, consistent whole-school approach that involves ongoing consultation with representatives of all the members of the school community. In addition, the LA anti-bullying policy ought to be regularly disseminated and discussed in schools. Such discussions can be facilitated by means of the school code of conduct, school assemblies and training opportunities and workshops for students, school staff and parents. Furthermore, conducting the research and working closely with students and teachers in schools enables the researcher to have access to both quantitative and qualitative information which is likely to prove useful when updating the objectives and aims of the LA anti-bullying action plan.

4. An important factor in addressing any form of bullying is for young people to feel confident enough to report such incidents to school staff. If school staff are unaware that such incidents are occurring they are unlikely to take action in keeping students safe. Through the use of focus group discussions during phase 2 of the research study, students’ views on the possible steps that could be taken to overcome the barriers that may prevent them from coming forward and reporting their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents were elicited. This method of data collection would be pivotal in valuing the views of young people as well as enabling them to contribute to the development of anti-bullying work. This would assist in meeting the objectives of strand 5 of the LA anti-bullying action plan (see Appendix 1). In addition, the information collated would hopefully encourage the school to actively respond to or implement the students’ ideas and thus strengthen the school’s anti-bullying practices.

5. Educational Psychologists can play a vital role in addressing all forms of bullying including cyberbullying. Their role could encompass an array of areas including: Assessment: such as determining the prevalence and extent of cyberbullying amongst young people. Prevention: in terms of offering guidance and support in developing anti-bullying policies. Education: for instance collaborating with ICT teachers and anti-bullying co-ordinators and supporting them in developing lesson plans around cyberbullying, Internet safety and responsible citizenship in the real and digital worlds. Intervention: as a non-teacher, EPs could offer a forum of mediation between the recipients and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Finally, parent and community outreach: this would involve EPs working alongside staff to facilitate parent and community education around cyberbullying.
3.3 Research design and approach

To address the research questions, case study methodology employing mixed research methods was adopted. Year 7 and Year 10 students in one secondary school participated in the study. Two different methods of data collection were used (survey and focus group discussions) as well as two different methods of data analysis (quantitative and qualitative). A case study approach was chosen due to its usefulness and appropriateness for this specific study. Atkinson and Woods (2003) point out that using case study methodology allows EPs to present data within its entire and ‘real life’ context. This is particularly relevant to EPs who usually work as applied (‘real-world’) psychologists working on individual and often complex cases, where a relatively idiosyncratic network of complexly operating variables is often encountered (Robson, 1993).

Quantitative and qualitative methods are typically associated with competing ontological and epistemological positions, and combining the two may violate the assumptions of their theoretical underpinnings, which is a common criticism levelled at using both types of methods in a single study (Creswell, Clark, Gutman & Hanson, 2003). However, utilising competing methods that are typically laden within different paradigms allows the methods to complement each other providing an additive outcome (Creswell et al., 2003). The use of mixed methods has been growing steadily in educational research since the 1960s (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). However, despite the growth in application of mixed methods to educational research, there are many unresolved issues, particularly with respect to research design. Many different mixed methods research designs are documented, these are known as typologies which are the rationales and purposes for conducting mixed methods research (see Bryman, 2006; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman & Hanson, 2003; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Morse, 2003;). Typologies are used as a means of classifying and identifying the key characteristics of the different mixed methods research designs. One way of creating such a typology is categorisation according to certain criteria, such as the timing or sequence in which methods are used or the priority given to them in the study design. However, authors on mixed methods have yet to reach consensus on the types of designs that exist, the names for them or how they might be represented visually. The design that best addressed this study’s specific research questions was a variant of the Explanatory Design known as the Follow-up Explanations Model which was developed by Creswell (2003).

The follow-up explanations model is a two-phase mixed methods design. The design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data. During analysis of the quantitative data the researcher identifies specific quantitative findings that need exploring or additional explanation, such as statistical differences among groups, individuals who scored at extreme levels, or
interesting and unexpected results. This first phase is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The researcher needs qualitative data to explain or expand on the quantitative findings from phase 1 of the study (Creswell, 2003). Because this design begins quantitatively, investigators typically place greater emphasis on the quantitative methods than the qualitative methods (QUAN > qual). Figure 3.1 below illustrates the follow-up explanations model.

**Figure 3.1: Follow-up Explanations Model**

![Follow-up Explanations Model](Taken from Creswell, 2003 p. 73)

The clear sequences of stages make this design appealing to researchers. This is because the researcher is able to conduct the two methods in separate phases and collect only one type of data at a time. This means that single researchers can conduct this design; and a research team is not required. An additional attraction of this design is the fact that the two phases can be presented in distinct sections making it less complicated to write up and providing a clear delineation for readers (Creswell, 2003).

However, this design is not without its challenges. In order to carry out phase two of the study a decision needed to be made as to which quantitative results needed further exploration or explanation. This could not be determined precisely until after the quantitative phase was completed. Therefore, the data from the quantitative phase of the study had to be collected and analysed before planning and embarking on the qualitative phase of the study. Because of the sequential nature of this design the time required for completion of the research was doubled. Secondly, this design requires researchers to decide whether to use participants from the same sample in each phase or to take a new sample of participants for the second phase. Because the researcher cannot always specify how participants will be selected for the second phase until the initial findings are obtained it can be difficult to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this design. In the case of this study, the members of the IRB were informed that at the end of phase one of the study, participants would be asked to complete a form which would invite them to state whether they would be willing to participate in future focus group
discussions. Hence, only those participants that had stated that they were willing to take part in the focus group discussions were considered for inclusion in the second phase of the research study. Thus, a second submission to the IRB for approval to carry out phase two of the study was not deemed necessary.

Although more costly in terms of time and resources, using mixed methods can have substantial advantages. For example, rather than focusing on a single specific research question, mixed methods may be used to address different but complementary questions. This can also help to improve interpretability and reduce inappropriate certainty (Robson, 2002). Creswell & Plano Clark, (2007) argue that a mixed methods approach is used by researchers because both quantitative and qualitative research in combination, provide a better understanding of the research problem than either research approach alone.

When applying critical realism to the current research, the adoption of mixed methods in this study allows the investigation of two complementary aims descriptive and explanatory. During phase 1, the descriptive phase of the research study, a quantitative method (questionnaire) was used. The use of a questionnaire enabled the exploration and identification of patterns and associations with regards to young people’s use of ICT, the extent of their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents and to whom such incidents were reported. It also helped tease out new or unexpected findings. Thus, the research questions in phase 1 of the study were underpinned by positivist assumptions such as the objective reality of the frequency and extent of students’ experiences according to pre-defined variables set out in the questionnaire.

In contrast, during phase 2, the explanatory phase of the study, a qualitative method (Nominal Group Technique (NCT) focus group discussions) was used, the purpose of which was to help elaborate, expand and seek further information to the additional question which arose from the findings captured from phase 1. The purpose of the focus group discussions was to elicit and make sense of students’ thoughts and ideas about what needs to happen in schools to encourage students to come forward and report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff. Thus, the research question in phase 2 was underpinned by interpretivist assumptions. The qualitative data would provide the contextual embedding of data that could not be captured by the predetermined response categories provided to participants in the questionnaire. Collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data within this study would provide a thorough picture of the phenomenon of cyberbullying within the particular school context being studied. However, within a critical realist stance the researcher acknowledges that a reality of participants’ experiences exist but also accepts that their experiences are likely to be influenced by the school and home context within which they exist.
3.4 Part 2: Phase 1 of the study

3.4.1 The main questionnaire.

For some children and young people, the topic of cyberbullying has the potential of being a sensitive issue. In this instance, the use of individual or group interviews were not deemed as appropriate methods of data collection. As an alternative method of data collection, a questionnaire was developed, the purpose of which was to collect quantifiable data on the extent of young people’s experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents and/or cyberbullying. A questionnaire was used because it has the advantage of anonymity and is deemed as less intrusive than other methods of collecting data such as individual or group interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Observational methods were not considered appropriate as it is difficult to directly observe cyberbullying as it tends to be carried out in private (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Thus, the use of a questionnaire enabled the gathering of data from a reasonably large sample of students which would not have been possible using other methods of data collection.

An established questionnaire containing specific questions that would provide answers to the study’s research questions did not exist. It is for this reason that a questionnaire tailored specifically for the purpose of the study was devised. The questionnaire used in the main study can be found in Appendix 3b. The questionnaire consisted entirely of closed questions. The initial two questions asked students to state which Year group they were in at school and whether they were male or female. The remainder of the questionnaire was divided into three sections which are now described.

Section 1: The first section of the questionnaire contained questions 1 to 4. These questions intended to address research question 1.

RQ1: What are students’ experiences of using ICT?

Students’ answers to these items would provide information about:

- Students’ accessibility to ICT, whether they own a mobile phone/Smartphone and whether they have access to the Internet outside of school.
• The number of hours per week in which students spend socialising with others using the Internet or their mobile phones.
• Whether students’ parents placed restrictions on their use of the Internet or mobile phones for socialising.

Section 2: This section of the questionnaire contained questions 5 to 11. These questions intended to address research questions, 2, 3 and 4.

RQ2a: What is the prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students?
RQ2b: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?
RQ3: Do those students who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?
RQ4a: How many students self-identify as having been the target of cyberbullying?
RQ4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

Students’ responses would provide information about:
• The different forms/types of unpleasant cyber incidents that students encounter.
• How often students experience unpleasant cyber incidents.
• The variety of media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occur.
• Where students are when they encounter unpleasant cyber incidents.
• Whether students consider their experience(s) as cyberbullying.
• Students’ awareness of the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents.
• Whether students are targeted by the same person in cyberspace and real life.

Section 3: This section of the questionnaire contained questions 12 to 16. Questions 12 to 14 focused on the impact unpleasant cyber incidents had on students and how they responded to such incidents. Question 12 provided data on how students felt when they experienced an unpleasant cyber incident. This data was used to help answer research question 4b. However, a decision was made to omit respondents’ answers to questions 13 and 14. The reason for this
was because the researcher was of the opinion that the answers to these questions would not offer any original contribution to the research.

Questions 15 and 16 intended to address research question 5.

**RQ5:** When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do young people go to confide in and seek help?

Students’ responses would provide information about:

- The range of people and/or services students notify.
- Reasons why students do not confide in staff at school.

### 3.5 Pilot questionnaire

#### 3.5.1 Administration of the pilot questionnaire.

Cohen et al. (2007) detail the importance of piloting a questionnaire and describe a range of benefits for undertaking this procedure. Some of the benefits are listed below.

- To check the clarity of the questionnaire instruction, layout and items.
- To eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording.
- To identify omissions and redundant or irrelevant items.
- To gain feedback on the layout and appearance of the questionnaire.
- To check the time taken to complete the questionnaire.
- To identify commonly misunderstood or non-completed items.

The pilot version of the questionnaire (see Appendix 3a) was reviewed by colleagues and members of the anti-bullying strategy steering group. In preparation for the research study and as a trial, the questionnaire was piloted with a group of Year 7 and Year 10 students attending a Secondary Centre for Learning (SCfL) that would not be participating in the main study. The researcher was the EP allocated to this school and had been given permission by the headteacher to carry out the pilot study. Before conducting the pilot study, the researcher met with the headteacher and Year 7 and Year 10 Pastoral Support Officers (PSOs) at the school where the questionnaire was to be piloted. The aims of both the pilot and main research study
were presented and discussed using a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix 4). It was agreed that a selection of students in Years 7 and 10 would be made available to participate in the pilot study. The PSOs arranged for parental information/consent letters (see Appendix 5a) to be handed out to a mixture of Year 7 and Year 10 students of different academic abilities. Table 3.1 below shows the demographics of the students that participated in the pilot study. The pilot study included an ample selection of students. The reason for using such a large sample was because; students in the main study would be divided into groups according to their academic Year group, gender and academic ability (an explanation of academic ability grouping is provided later in Section 3.6.2). The researcher needed to ensure that administrating the questionnaire in this way was manageable and not too unwieldy. Another reason for the ample pilot sample size was so that the data processing and analysis could be piloted.

The researcher intended to seek permission from the headteacher for students from the school to also participate in the main study. However, a few weeks after the pilot study had been carried out; the school had an Ofsted inspection. The outcome of the inspection was inadequate, and the headteacher unexpectedly left the school. The school underwent a period of uncertainty; it is for this reason that the researcher did not pursue the school’s involvement in the main study any further.

Table 3.1: Demographics of the students participating in the pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage of Students (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>49.6% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>50.4% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.4% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.6% (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Ability (FFTLive data bandings)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN (L)</td>
<td>35.3% (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (M)</td>
<td>32.4% (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average (U)</td>
<td>32.4% (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (139)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To help the researcher carry out the pilot study she enlisted the support of other professionals. These were a colleague who worked as an Inclusion Support Worker (ISW) and the school PSOs. The first cohort of students that piloted the questionnaire was a group of girls from Year 7. Before arriving at the school, the PSO had split the students into separate groups of three according to their academic ability, (an explanation of academic ability grouping is provided later in Section 3.6.2). The PSOs, ISW and the researcher administered the questionnaires separately to each group of students. Before the questionnaires were piloted, the students in each group were given a sheet which included child-friendly information relating to the intentions, objectives and the structure of the pilot study. The adults leading each group read the content of the information sheet out aloud to the students. After which, they were asked to indicate whether they were willing to participate in the pilot study by signing the attached student assent form (see Appendix 6a). Once the students had completed the questionnaires they were asked to indicate on another sheet of paper whether they would like to talk privately with one of the PSOs about any unpleasant cyber incidents they may have experienced. Students were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a follow up pilot focus group discussion (see Appendix 7). There was then a general discussion in which students were asked for their opinions about the layout and wording of the pilot questionnaire. During this informal discussion the adults who had administered the questionnaires made contemporaneous notes on a ‘students’ feedback sheet’ (see Appendix 8). The ‘students’ feedback sheets’ were collected in and reviewed which resulted in several changes to the pilot questionnaire (the details of these changes are discussed in the next section). Lastly, all the students were given two information sheets to read at their leisure. One sheet listed useful websites that could provide support and advice on cyberbullying issues (see Appendix 9) and the other sheet listed useful safety tips for when using the Internet (see Appendix 10). This questionnaire administration process was repeated with three more different groups of students. This process is represented in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Pilot questionnaire administration process
3.5.2 Changes to the pilot questionnaire.

Changes made to the questionnaire related to the following.

The original question (1b) asked the question: ‘Is your mobile phone a Smartphone?’ Several students stated that they had access to more than one mobile phone and they wanted to know which particular mobile phone the question was referring to. The researcher wanted to find out which type of mobile phone students used the most. Hence, the wording to question (1b) was changed to: ‘If you have a mobile phone, do you usually use a standard mobile phone or a Smartphone?’

The revised questionnaire added an additional question which was numbered as question 4. The additional question asked students to indicate whether their parents tried to limit or restrict the time they spent socialising with others using ICT. This question was added because question 3 from the pilot questionnaire ignited a debate amongst some of the students who stated that the time they spent socialising with others using ICT varied. This variation was usually dependent upon whether any parental restrictions were imposed on the amount of time the students were allowed to use ICT. It is for this reason that the additional question relating to parental restrictions on the use of ICT was added. It is also important to note that the inclusion of this additional question meant that the subsequent questions had to be numbered differently to those in the pilot questionnaire. The revised questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix 3b. The limitations of the questionnaire are discussed in more detail in Section 3.9.

3.6 Sampling and participant recruitment for the main study

3.6.1 Context of the school.

The school in which the main study was carried out was selected due to opportunistic reasons. The researcher was not the allocated EP to the school. The assistant headteacher at the school was a member of the LA anti-bullying strategy steering group. She was aware of the researcher’s intentions to carry out research on the prevalence of students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. After the proposed research was presented to her in more detail, permission to proceed with a selection of students from the school was granted.

Before providing information about the sample of students who participated in the study, it is worth noting that the school, from which the students were selected, has some notable
characteristics which may have an influence on the findings. At the time the research was undertaken, the LA in which the school was located was the fourth most disadvantaged in England (DCLG, 2010). The school was a mixed community SCfL with a total of 1,005 students aged 11 to 16 years old. The gender split of the school was 49% boys and 51% girls. There were no students at the school for whom English was not the first language and almost all students were from White British backgrounds. An above national average proportion of students (31.8%) were eligible for student premium funding, which is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals. The national average for student premium funding in 2012 was 26.7%. With regards to attainment, 36% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths, this was below the national average of 58%. A total of 14.2% of students in the school had a SEN Statement or were on School Action Plus (SA+) of the Special Needs Register which was above the average of 8.1%. Student attendance was 92.6% compared to the national average of 94.3%.

In November 2012, the school underwent an Ofsted inspection, at this time students’ attendance at the school was a concern, 7.4% of students were deemed as having poor attendance compared to the national average of 5.7%. The attendance of disabled students and those with special educational needs was considered well below average; concerns were also raised about too many students being late for school and lessons. The overall outcome of the Ofsted inspection was less than satisfactory. In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector was of the opinion that the school required significant improvement. Achievement of students, quality of teaching and behaviour and safety of students were all deemed as inadequate. In an attempt to drive up standards the school entered into a partnership with an educational trust. This is a multi-academy organisation with both its secondary schools deemed as ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted and its primary school one of the most improved in the country. Since this partnership was established, the school has received regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors and has recently converted to academy status.

The school in which the study was carried out was not too dissimilar to the additional five secondary schools that also existed within the LA. Table 3.2 on the next page provides further contextual information about the other five secondary schools within the locality the study was based. The reader can see that students attending these schools also came from predominantly White British backgrounds and an above average proportion of students were eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of students from three of the schools had a SEN Statement or they were on SA+ of the Special Needs Register. With regards to attainment a below average proportion of students from four of the schools were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths.
Table 3.2: Demographic information of other schools within the Local Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>School E Pilot study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of school</strong></td>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of students</strong></td>
<td>1,119 students aged 11 to 18 years.</td>
<td>999 students aged 11 to 16 years old.</td>
<td>1098 students aged 11 to 18 years old.</td>
<td>996 students aged 11 to 16 years old.</td>
<td>936 students aged 11 to 16 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% boys and 50% girls.</td>
<td>50.6% boys and 49.4% girls.</td>
<td>55% boys and 45% girls.</td>
<td>50.9% boys and 49.1% girls.</td>
<td>50.3% boys and 49.7% girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Most students were of White British heritage.</td>
<td>Most students were of White British heritage.</td>
<td>Most students were of White British heritage.</td>
<td>Most students were of White British heritage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance</strong></td>
<td>92.3% attendance</td>
<td>92.3% attendance</td>
<td>93.9% attendance</td>
<td>93.6% attendance</td>
<td>93.7% attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility for pupil premium funding,</strong></td>
<td>55.9% of students were eligible for student premium funding</td>
<td>48.4% of students were eligible for student premium funding</td>
<td>41.1% of students were eligible for student premium funding</td>
<td>40.2% of students were eligible for student premium funding</td>
<td>41.9% of students were eligible for student premium funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attainment</strong></td>
<td>42% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths</td>
<td>47% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths</td>
<td>49% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths</td>
<td>58% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths</td>
<td>37% of students were achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEN</strong></td>
<td>7.4% of students had a SEN Statement or were on SA+</td>
<td>23.4% of students had a SEN Statement or were on SA+</td>
<td>12.1% of students had a SEN Statement or were on SA+</td>
<td>10.9% of students had a SEN Statement or were on SA+</td>
<td>6.8% of students had a SEN Statement or were on SA+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome of Ofsted inspection</strong></td>
<td>Inadequate Special measures</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The figures presented are from the year 2012. This data have been obtained from Ofsted Schools Data Dashboard website, 2016)
The researcher contacted the headteachers and SENCo\'s at three of the other secondary schools within the LA via email. Only the SENCo from School B responded and a date was set to meet with her to discuss the aims of the main study. However, on arrival at the school the researcher was informed that the SENCo was absent on sick leave. An email was sent to the SENCo several weeks later to re-arrange a date to meet with the researcher, unfortunately no response was received.

3.6.2 Sampling.

The researcher informed the assistant headteacher that she was interested in investigating, whether there were differences in students\' experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents depending on factors such as age, gender and academic ability. In order to investigate this, a reasonably large sample of students would be required. However, to minimise disruption within the school, permission was only given to administer the questionnaire to Year 7 and Year 10 students. The researcher met with the relevant PSOs and arrangements were made for information and opt-out consent letters to be mailed out to the parents of Year 7 and Year 10 students (see Appendix 5b). Only four opt-out letters were returned by the parents of students from Year 7.

In total 352 Year 7 and Year 10 students participated in the study. Table 3.3 presented on the next page breaks down the percentage and number of students according to Year group, gender and academic ability. Within the sample, age and gender were distributed relatively evenly. Students were allocated to either three of the academic ability groups depending on their ability bandings according to Fischer Family Trust Live (FFTLive) data. FFTLive is an online reporting system which many schools use. It processes data for schools and students in England and Wales and provides online reports which analyse students\' academic results and progress across all subjects and key stages, comparing performance to similar schools and the national average. FFTLive also provides estimates of future student performance. A student\'s ability banding is based on his/her prior attainment at the end of the previous Key Stage. The FFTLive outlines three banding levels which are set out below. Hence, students in the lower band group were allocated to the below average ability group, students in the middle band group were allocated to the average ability group and lastly, students in the upper band group were allocated to the above average ability group.

- L = Lower (broadly equivalent to age standardised score of 95 or lower).
- M = Middle (broadly equivalent to age standardised score of 96 to 105).
- U = Upper (broadly equivalent to age standardised score of 105 or above).
Table 3.3: Demographics of the students participating in the main study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage of Students (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>47.2% (166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>52.8% (186)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (352)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.4% (174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.6% (178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (352)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Ability (FFTLive data bandings)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN (L)</td>
<td>40.6% (143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average (M)</td>
<td>32.4% (114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average (U)</td>
<td>27% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100% (352)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7 Administration of revised questionnaire

The revised questionnaire was administered to 352 students in September 2012; this was the first month of the new academic year. It is important to highlight that only the ISW, PSOs and the researcher administered the questionnaire. The primary advantage of this approach was that similar procedures in administering the questionnaires would be used with each group of students. This helped ensure consistency and enabled a more accurate comparison of the results. The questionnaire was first administered to Year 7 girls. On arrival at the school in the morning, all the Year 7 girls were in the school lecture theatre. The students were thanked for agreeing to come along and after brief introductions there followed a short chat about general matters designed to put the students at ease and explain the purpose of the research. The students were told about the questionnaire and they were informed that all their responses to the questions would remain anonymous. They were also assured that if at any time they wished to withdraw from completing the questionnaire they could do so.

The students were split into three groups according to academic ability. The three adults leading the administration of the questionnaires, each had a list of students’ names. The researcher’s list consisted of the names of students that the FFTLive data base had deemed as below average ability. These students remained in the lecture theatre with the researcher. The students’ names on the Year 7 PSO’s list were students that the FFTLive data base had
deemed as within average ability. The PSO took this group of students to the school library. Lastly, the students’ names on the ISW’s list were students that the FFTLive data base had deemed as above average ability and the ISW took these students to the conference room.

The first reason for organising students into groups of single sex and attainment level during both the pilot and main study was because of the sensitive nature of cyberbullying. I was advised by members of the University of Manchester Ethics Committee to implement specific ethical and safeguarding features to minimise any potential risks to students’ psychological well being. One of the features recommended was splitting students into small groups, the aim of which was to offer a safer and more secure environment for the students. It also meant that more space would be available to seat the students apart from each other so that they were unable to see each others’ responses to the questions. The second reason was to aid data collection. Each student had a paper version of the questionnaire which they were asked to complete. The questionnaires given to the students in the below average ability group were printed on pink paper. Students in the within average ability group were given questionnaires that had been printed on green paper. Lastly, the questionnaires given to the students in the above average ability group were printed on white paper. When inputting the data into International Business Machines Corporation, Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0 (IBM, SPSS Statistics, 2011) the colour of paper the questionnaire was printed on enabled the researcher to know which ability group the student should be assigned to.

This pragmatic way of administering the questionnaire was considered acceptable in the context of both schools that participated in the pilot and main study. Grouping students in such a manner was not considered unusual practice as ordinarily students were split according to academic ability during their lessons. Once the students had settled into their separate groups, they were handed an information sheet and an attached student assent form (see Appendix 6b). The content of the information sheet was read out aloud to the students and their written assent was obtained. It is worth noting that none of the students declined to participate in the research.

Each student had a paper version of the questionnaire which they were asked to complete. The questionnaires given to the students in the below average ability group were printed on pink paper. Students in the within average ability group were given questionnaires that had been printed on green paper. Lastly, the questionnaires given to the students in the above average ability group were printed on white paper. When inputting the data into International Business Machines Corporation, Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0 (IBM, SPSS Statistics, 2011) the colour of paper the questionnaire was printed on enabled the researcher to know which ability group the student should be assigned to.
In each of the rooms where the questionnaire was administered there was a Smart Board which is an interactive whiteboard. The questionnaire layout was displayed on the Smart Board and was on view for all the students to see. The administration process was highly structured. The adult leading the administration of the questionnaire read out each of the questions to the students whilst simultaneously making reference to the same question which was displayed on the Smart Board. The expected benefits of this were; it gave students with poor literacy skills and poor concentration the opportunity to be included in the research, it reduced misinterpretation or ambiguities with regards to students' understanding of the questions and it ensured a good response rate.

After answering question 6, the paper version of the questionnaire instructed those students who had not experienced any unpleasant cyber incidents to skip the remaining questions and they were asked by the adult administrator to quietly complete a word search puzzle. Those students who had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents were instructed to continue and the adult proceeded with the administration of the remainder of the questionnaire. The questionnaire administration process took approximately 40 minutes to complete. Once completed the students placed their questionnaires into a plastic pouch provided and were asked to place them face down on the table in front of them. The questionnaires were collected in by one of the adults in the room.

Once the students had completed the questionnaire they were asked to indicate on a separate sheet of paper by ticking either Yes or No, whether they would like to speak to one of the PSOs in private about any unpleasant cyber experiences they may have encountered. They were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion at a later date (see Appendix 7). Once completed these sheets were collected in by one of the adults and later given to the researcher. A written note of the names of those students who had indicated that they would like to speak to one of the PSOs was made. This information was then passed on to the PSOs the following day. Details of the students requesting to speak with a PSO are shown in Table 3.4 on the next page. All the students were then given two information sheets, one sheet listed useful websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues (see Appendix 9) and the other sheet listed useful safety tips when using the internet (see Appendix 10). The PSOs for each Year group were also given an information sheet which listed details of various websites that provide advice to teaching professionals about the different types of bullying and how to respond when a student has been the target of bullying (see Appendix 11).
Table 3.4: Number of students requesting to speak to a learning mentor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group and Gender</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 (girls)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 (boys)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 (boys)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 (girls)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire administration process was then repeated with Year 7 boys after morning break time. Year 10 girls and Year 10 boys were administered the same questionnaire the following day in the morning. Please refer to Figure 3.2 found in Section 3.5.1 to see this process illustrated pictorially. It is also important to note that, during the administration of the questionnaire two adults were present within each group. It was considered necessary to have two adults present for the following practical and ethical reasons:

- To help facilitate the administration of the questionnaire.
- To help escort the students to the room where they were to complete the questionnaire.
- To help escort the students back to class on completion of the questionnaire.
- To withdraw and console any student that may become distressed.

### 3.8 Questionnaire data analysis

The questionnaire data consisted entirely of quantitative information. The data was analysed using IBM, SPSS Statistics (2011). The data was initially screened for errors and omissions. Of the 352 questionnaires completed, all were found to have appropriate complete data. All the data was nominal. Dichotomous data was coded as 0 for No and 1 for Yes. Other nominal data started with a code value of 0, this increased by one for each answer option available to the respondent. A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) code book for the data can be viewed in Appendix 12.

First, frequency analysis was carried out. This involved the use of descriptive statistics which were employed to explore prevalence trends in terms of the frequency and extent of students’
experiences according to pre-defined variables set out in the questionnaire. Next, inferential statistics were carried out to examine possible factors which might make young people; (a) more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents and (b) more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. To carry out this analysis logistic regression models were performed which explored the predictive values of the selected independent variables. The logistic regression model is a special case of a generalised linear model and analyses models where the dependent variable (outcome) is a nominal variable. Analysis for the binary logistic regression model assumes the outcome variable is a categorical and dichotomous variable having either occurred or not occurred as the outcome. Another fundamental assumption in logistic regression is that natural logarithms of odds are linearly related to the independent variables. Instead of the conventional Beta Coefficient, the logistic model is rewritten in terms of odds of an event occurring, defined as the ratio of the probability that an event will occur to the probability that the event will not occur.

3.9 Limitations of the questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the research was highly structured, with items being grouped into logically coherent sections so that it was easy for the students to respond to. The questions were kept short and unambiguous and contained closed dichotomous questions which more often than not allowed only one of two responses, either Yes or No. Closed questions have the advantage of being easier to administer and usually provide what Cohen et al. (2007) describe as “clear, unequivocal responses from participants” (p. 322). This allows the researcher to be fairly confident that the responses obtained are reliable. Nonetheless, there are disadvantages to this type of response format. It is important to point out that some of the students participating in the research may not have liked the limited choice format and would have preferred instead to add further information to their answers. This would have been particularly useful as the categories within some questions may not have been exhaustive. Acquiring additional information from the students could have provided a more detailed picture about their experiences.

All the students completed the questionnaires in the presence of two adults. The administration process was highly structured as one of the adults guided the students through the questionnaire content using a format that was also visible to the students on the Smart Board. Cohen et al. (2007) argue that this guidance and support proves useful in enabling uncertainties and queries to be addressed and it also ensures a good response rate. On the other hand, some of the students may have felt threatened or uneasy by the adults’ presence and may have
been too uncomfortable to state that they did not want to participate in the research despite the use of student assent forms. Another limitation to consider is the fact that students were asked to think about their experiences over the past 6 months. Clearly there is a reliance on memory which is not always going to be accurate. Furthermore, with regards to anonymity, this may have or may not have facilitated honest responses from the students. According to Cohen et al. (2007) anonymity can lead to under-reporting or over-reporting by participants.

Finally, it is difficult to claim questionnaire external reliability. It is reasonable to assume that students would have been able to answer some of the questions with greater reliability than others. For example, the question ‘do you have a mobile phone?’ is likely to have been answered more accurately than the question ‘approximately how many hours per week do you spend on your mobile/Smartphone or the Internet communicating socially with others?’ Students might have underestimated or overestimated the hours per week that they spend socialising with others using their mobile phones and the Internet. In order to ensure greater reliability in students’ responses to the latter question they would have had to keep a diary in which their daily mobile phone and Internet use was logged. However, this procedure was not deemed practical. Therefore, the researcher is aware of the potential unreliability of students’ responses to some of the questions. However, any underestimation or overestimation in students’ responses is likely to have been consistent across the sample as a whole. Therefore, on balance a reasonable degree of reliability across the questionnaire can be accepted.

On the other hand, content validity can be accounted for. Content validity determines whether all aspects of what is intended to be measured have been captured. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.5, prior to administering the questionnaire in the main research study a well planned pilot study was conducted. Students that participated in the pilot study were asked for their opinions about the layout and wording of the questionnaire. They were also asked specific questions about the clarity of items and whether some questions needed omitting or adding to the questionnaire. Furthermore, adult direction using the Smart Board during the administration of the questionnaire will have also helped reduce any ambiguities or misunderstandings relating to the questions.
3.10 Part 3: Phase 2 of the study

3.10.1 Aim of Phase 2.

From the analyses of the data collected during phase 1 of the study, it was evident that students were reluctant to report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff. It could be argued that two important factors in addressing cyberbullying are the willingness for young people to come forward and report the incidents to school staff and the capacity of school staff to respond appropriately. During phase 2 of the study, the use of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) focus group discussions provided an opportunity for an interactive discussion with students. This related to their views and ideas on factors that might help encourage students to disclose their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to staff in school. The specific research question guiding the second phase of the study was:

RQ6: What are students’ ideas and views about what actions need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff?

3.11 Focus groups

Focus group research involves organised discussion with a selected group of individuals. The purpose of which is to give rise to active debate which may help to encourage participants “to collectively address topics to which, as individuals, they may have previously devoted little attention” (Barbour, 2008, p. 134). An additional purpose of focus groups is for participants to “consider their own views in the context of the views of others” (Patton, 2002, p. 386). According to Kitzinger (1994), interaction is a crucial feature of focus groups because interaction between participants highlights their view of the world, the language they use and their values and beliefs about a situation. Interaction also stimulates debate, encourages elaboration and enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings. This contributes to the “researcher gaining information-rich data in a specific social context and provides understanding into public views or discourses which may differ from the private views expressed in one-to-one interviews” (Barbour, 2007, p. 47). Furthermore, whilst focus groups are usually guided by an interview schedule of key questions, the development of the conversation is driven by the group’s participants. This helps free the discussion from existing preconceptions and allows the researcher to engage with unforeseen topics that may arise during the course of the discussion (Nicolson & Anderson, 2003).
### 3.12 Sample selection

The optimum number of participants for a focus group may vary. Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest between six and eight participants. This is large enough to gain a variety of perspectives and small enough not to become too disorderly or fragmented (Rabiee, 2004). As explained earlier in Sections 3.5.1 and 3.7, students who had completed the questionnaires in the pilot study and the main study during phase 1 were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in any future focus group discussions. The parents of these students were sent out letters. The letters contained information about the purpose of the focus groups as well as an opt-in consent form (see Appendix 13a and 13b). The six consent forms that were received from the parents of students who participated in the pilot study were considered adequate. However, the biggest challenge was obtaining sufficient consent forms from the parents of students who participated in the main study. Letters were sent out to these parents in the post on three separate occasions and on the third occasion they were also directly handed to the students. It took a total of three months to obtain a sufficient number of parental consent forms. Column two in Table 3.5 presented below shows how many students were willing to participate in the focus group discussions. Whereas column three shows the lower number of students whose parents gave consent for their children to participate in the focus group discussions.

#### Table 3.5: Sample selection for focus group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Number of students willing to participate</th>
<th>Number of students whose parents gave consent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only one pilot focus group discussion was conducted which consisted of six Year 7 girls. For the main research study a total of three focus group discussions were held. Figure 3.3 below shows how many girls and boys were in each group.

**Figure 3.3: Student composition of the main study’s three focus groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four girls</td>
<td>Five girls</td>
<td>Five girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two boys</td>
<td>One boy</td>
<td>One boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.13 Focus group preparation

According to Green, Draper and Dowler (2003) the uniqueness of a focus group is its ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction. Members of the group should therefore feel comfortable enough with each other so that they can engage in discussion. Before conducting any of the focus group discussions, the researcher met with the PSOs at the schools where the pilot study and the main study focus group discussions were going to be carried out. The purpose of these meetings was to check that the focus groups that students were allocated to were appropriate. In other words, as far as the PSOs were aware, did the students get along with each other so that they would feel comfortable enough to engage fully in discussion? The focus groups that students were allocated to were deemed appropriate. Students were grouped according to Year group and were likely to know each other. Krueger (1994) and Kitzinger (1994) advocate the use of a homogeneous group or pre-existing group. Both argue that participants that know each other are more likely to relate to each other’s comments and even challenge one another. Feeling comfortable with one another encourages the expression of views and this factor is particularly important when little information is available on the topic under investigation.

However, regardless of whether a pre-existing or newly-formed group is used, the important role of the focus group facilitator should not be underestimated (Krueger, 1994). A skilful focus group facilitator should be able to create an environment in which the participants feel relaxed and encouraged to engage and exchange feelings, views and ideas. Before any of the focus group discussions commenced, the students were thanked for agreeing to come along and after
brief introductions and light refreshments there followed a short chat about general matters designed to put the students at ease and explain the purpose of the research. Following this, student written assent was obtained (see Appendix 14). It is worth noting that none of the students declined to participate.

3.14 Pilot study

3.14.1 Pilot focus group procedure.

The purpose of the pilot focus group was to enable the researcher to make any necessary adjustments before conducting the main study focus group discussions. It took place on the school premises, during the school day and was conducted in the conference room. Chairs were organised so that the students were sat in a U-shape facing the researcher. The students who participated in the pilot focus group discussion were six, Year 7 girls; who were given name tags to wear. A focus group script guide was used when conducting the discussion (see Appendix 15). The discussion was highly structured as a similar process used in NGT (Delbecq & van de Ven, 1971) was employed, this process will now be discussed in detail.

An open-ended question was read out aloud and visually displayed on the whiteboard for the participants to see. The question the students were asked was: ‘I would like to know your views and ideas about what needs to happen in school, to support students in the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff?’ Each participant was asked to think of as many possible answers to the question as they could. Students were instructed to silently and independently write each individual answer down on one of the blank cards they had been given. The students were given approximately ten minutes to do this. The main reason for doing this was to acquire lots of ideas and discourage students from editing their opinions to fit in with the prevailing view. In other words, it gave everyone in the group an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, while avoiding the likelihood of one person dominating the group process. Other reasons for implementing this technique were as follows:

- it gave students time for thinking and reflection;
- it promoted social facilitation (e.g., seeing others hard at work); and
- it avoided interruptions, undue focus on one idea, and competition, as well as status and conformance pressures or choosing prematurely between ideas.
The cards were then collected in and all the ideas were written down on flipchart paper and displayed on the wall for the students to see. The benefits of doing this were:

- it provided a written record of students' ideas;
- it promoted equal participation in the presentation of ideas;
- it separated the ideas from the students;
- it allowed for the tolerance of conflicting ideas; and
- it encouraged hitchhiking on ideas. Hitchhiking refers to a process that may stimulate other participants to think of an idea not recorded during silent generation and allows them to offer it.

The focus group discussion centred on the ideas displayed on the flipchart. All the items were individually discussed. Duplicate ideas were eliminated and if new ideas occurred to someone, they were added to the list. The benefits of doing this were:

- it avoided unduly focusing on any one idea or a subset of ideas;
- it provided an opportunity for clarification and the elimination of any misunderstanding; and
- it outlined the arguments and disagreements over ideas.

The duration of the whole focus group procedure was approximately one hour. The discussion of the ideas was audio-recorded which the researcher listened to later that day. At the end of the focus group discussion, the students were also asked to indicate whether they wanted to speak privately with one of the PSOs.

3.14.2 Issues identified.

When listening to the audio-recording of the pilot focus group discussion it was apparent, that at times, some of the students spoke simultaneously which made it difficult to decipher what was being said and by whom. On reflection, it was clear that had the researcher been transcribing the audio-recording she would have experienced difficulties in doing this with precision which would have impacted on the accuracy of the data. It was therefore important to stress to students at the beginning of the main focus group discussions that it was important for each student to speak one at a time. This would make the audio-recording transcriptions more
accurate and easier to transcribe. It is also important to point out that whilst NGT has many advantages it is not without limitations. This discussion method lacks flexibility as issues/ideas are discussed one at a time using a highly structured process. It is worth noting that for some of the participants, this process may have appeared too mechanical and less stimulating than other focus group techniques.

3.15 Main study focus group discussions

The main focus group discussions were conducted in an identical manner to the pilot focus group discussion. The only amendment that had to be made which had been identified when listening to the audio-recording of the pilot focus group discussion was the importance of instructing the students to speak one at a time. This would make the audio-recordings easier to transcribe. A total of three focus group discussions were carried out. The composition of these groups were shown earlier in Figure 3.3.

3.16 Data analysis

3.16.1 Recording the data.

As already mentioned the focus group discussions were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. The researcher completed a full transcription of the audio data from all three of the main study’s focus group discussions. The students were informed that this process would be undertaken. None of the students voiced concerns over using the transcriptions for the purposes that had been explained to them.

3.16.2 Thematic analysis.

The transcriptions were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting, allowing for the organisation and description of collated data in rich detail. Braun and Clarke (2006) maintain that the strength of thematic analysis lies in its theoretical freedom, as it is not tied to any particular philosophical or theoretical underpinning. This makes thematic analysis a flexible and widely adaptable
technique for analysis. In line with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study, the thematic analysis reflected the critical realist position adopted, which was that an external ‘reality’ existed independent of our beliefs and understandings, though the reality could only be gained through socially constructed meanings and personal understanding.

Critical realism acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of reality. Therefore, thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality.

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Braun and Clarke (2006) also state the importance of researchers determining the type of analysis they want to do and the claims they want to make in relation to the data set. In other words, researchers need to be clear about what they are doing and why, and include the often omitted ‘how’ they did their analysis in their research write up. This enables the research to be effectively evaluated and compared or synthesised with other studies on the topic under investigation. In thematic analysis, themes or patterns within data can be identified in one of two primary ways, that is either in a data driven inductive or bottom up analysis (Frith & Gleeson, 2004), or in a theoretical driven deductive or top down analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997). Inductive or bottom-up analysis of the data is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into the researcher’s analytic preconceptions or a pre-existing coding framework. In this method, thematic analysis allows for a rich description of the data set and may bear little relationship to the specific question that was asked of the participants. On the other hand, deductive or top-down analysis of data tends to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven. This form of thematic analysis tends to provide less of a rich description of the data overall, and more a detailed analysis of some specific aspect of the data coding for a specific research question.

As already highlighted, the purpose of the focus group discussions carried out in the current research was to obtain information from students that would help answer RQ6: What are students’ ideas and views about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of cyberbullying to staff? This final research question evolved during the analysis of the quantitative data collected during phase 1 of the study. Braun and Clarke (2006) would argue that “data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (p. 84) and data coded with
a specific question in mind would tend to be driven by a theoretical or analytic interest, using a deductive or top-down approach in which the researcher would try to fit the data into either his or her analytic preconceptions or a pre-existing coding framework. Hence, analytic preconceptions usually consist of the researcher’s theoretical interests and assumptions which lead to the researcher playing an active role in identifying themes. According to Holloway and Todres, (2003) researchers should make their underlying assumptions explicit. The theoretical interests and assumptions that may influence the qualitative data analysis for this study have already been detailed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3. On the other hand, pre-existing coding frameworks are usually based on themes already identified from previous research in the area. However, to the researcher’s knowledge investigating students’ views about the ways in which schools can support students in reporting cyberbullying incidents is an area that has not yet been researched in the area of cyberbullying. This means that no previous themes on the topic have already been identified with which to create a pre-existing framework. With this in mind, a theoretical driven deductive/top-down approach may not be totally relevant as it may exclude important themes emerging from the data which may not necessarily sit comfortably within the theory driving the research. Thus, the decision was made to implement a ‘hybrid’ inductive and deductive thematic analysis as described by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). This allowed the evidence gained from any existing theory and knowledge on cyberbullying to be included in the analysis (deductive analysis), together with data driven inductive analysis that would allow the data to identify additional patterns and themes, as well as refining existing knowledge.

3.16.3 Conducting thematic analysis.

Each group interview audio-recording was fully transcribed and the notes taken during the discussions helped clarify points and ensure accurate representation of participants’ responses. Following the full transcriptions of the data, the names of each participant was substituted with a false name. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) procedural template for conducting thematic analysis was used (see Appendix 16).

3.16.4 Thematic networks.

According to Attride-Stirling (2001) if qualitative research is to yield meaningful and useful results, it is imperative that the material being examined is analysed in a methodical manner. One such tool that can usefully aid the organisation of thematic analyses of textual data is the use of thematic networks. These are “web-like illustrations (networks) that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text” (p.386). The application of thematic networks was used as a
tool in analysis for this study. However, it is important to note that these networks are only a tool in analysis, not the analysis itself. Once a thematic network has been constructed, it then serves as an organising principle and an illustrative tool in the presentation and interpretation of the analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

A thematic network consists of three themes (see Figure 3.4 below). It is developed starting from the basic theme and working inwards towards the organising theme then finally the global theme. Basic themes are the lowest-order themes derived from the textual data. Taken in isolation, a basic theme will tell the reader very little, they need to be read in the context of other basic themes which when taken together represent an organising theme. Organising themes are middle-order themes that organise basic themes into clusters of similar issues. They represent the main components of the superordinate theme from the text as a whole. A group of organising themes then form a global theme. Global themes are the core part of the thematic network and represent the main ideas and metaphors in the data as a whole.

**Figure 3.4: Structure of a thematic network**
3.17 Limitations of focus group discussions

3.17.1 Threats to validity.

Internal validity refers to something measuring “what it is supposed to measure” (Gray, 2004, p. 219). In order to maximise the validity of the focus group discussions and to ensure that the focus group discussions were focused on discovering information that was relevant to the research question several steps were taken. First, students were asked to focus on one specific question which was permanently displayed for them to see. They were then asked to silently and independently write each individual answer down on one of the blank cards they had been given. The advantages of this have already been discussed in Section 3.14.1. Lastly, visually presenting all the participants’ ideas on flip chart sheets helped keep participants focused on the main question.

It could be argued that the students may well have provided socially desirable answers which could have led to invalid information being gathered. The intention of the focus group discussions was to seek out information about students’ ideas and views and did not focus on their personal experiences of cyberbullying. Thus, any potential sensitive issues around the topic of cyberbullying were reduced. Also the students were volunteers and confidentiality and anonymity was assured from the outset. Lastly, in order to strengthen validity, techniques that aimed to build rapport and trust were used.

3.17.2 Threats to reliability.

A reliable instrument “must consistently measure what it is set out measure” (Gray, 2004, p. 219). To ensure standardised procedures for the participants in all three focus groups a focus group script was developed and used (see Appendix 15). The purpose of the script was to ensure that all participants had similar experiences and received the same instructions. It was hoped that this would reduce the effects of interviewer bias which may have inadvertently been introduced. It is not certain whether all participants fully understood the focus group discussion question and whether their responses or level of participation were influenced by any ‘power dynamics’ within the group. However, it is important to remind the reader that prior to conducting the focus group discussions, the appropriateness of the groupings of students within the focus groups were discussed with the PSOs; no issues were identified.
3.18 Limitations and considerations of thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed data. However, this form of analysis has been referred to as a “poorly branded method” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) in the sense that it does not exist as rigidly as other named qualitative methods. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that, during the coding process researchers may become too immersed in the data set which could result in the researcher developing a narrow analytic field. Thus, a biased emphasis on some aspects of the phenomenon under investigation may be developed and crucial aspects may therefore be disregarded. On the other hand, the advantages of immersion in the data set and developing a comprehensive understanding rather than performing a more mechanical coding process absent of meaning has also been recognised (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Being immersed in the transcription data enabled the researcher to build up a rich and detailed picture of students’ ideas and views about how to make the reporting of all forms of bullying to school staff easier for students. It also ensured that one-off, yet key comments were not overlooked. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight the fact that analysis and interpretation of textual data can be an unwieldy task making the comprehensive understanding of a qualitative data set a challenge. Undoubtedly, there is potential for error and bias especially when a researcher repeatedly has to process voluminous amounts of text-based data generated from qualitative inquiry. Therefore attempts to establish some degree of authenticity and trustworthiness of the transcription codes were made.

3.18.1 Establishing authenticity of the transcription codes.

The first step in establishing some degree of authenticity and trustworthiness of the codes was the employment of a similar process used in NGT (Delbecq & van de Ven, 1971) which was used at the beginning of the focus group discussion. Part of this process involved visually displaying participants’ ideas on flip chart sheets which enabled participants to be engaged at some level in the contemporaneous coding and constructing of themes. Therefore, it was not deemed necessary to enhance the authenticity of the researcher’s data analysis and interpretation through respondent validation. The second step in establishing some degree of authenticity and trustworthiness of the codes was the establishment of inter-coder reliability. Mays and Pope (1995) claim that, “the analysis of qualitative data can be enhanced by organising an independent assessment of transcripts by additional skilled qualitative researchers and comparing agreement between raters” (p. 110). The more agreement between the coders, the more confidence a researcher has in the data analysis produced. A high level of agreement demonstrates that the codes and themes are shared constructs and not simply a
figment of the researcher’s imagination (Kurasaki, 2000). However, Goodwin and Goodwin (1984) state that coders are not usually expected to agree completely, because it is generally accepted that each has a unique perspective upon the context of inquiry, but that they should record essentially the same events and classify their data in a congruent manner.

3.18.2 The inter-coder reliability process.

To achieve acceptable levels of reliability, the process of coding the transcriptions entailed several steps which are described below.

3.18.2.1 Annotating the text.

In terms of the size of the sample of transcript analysed there is little agreement amongst researchers as to how large a sample of texts is appropriate. Some recommend 10% of the transcripts (Hodson, 1999), while others argue as few as five to ten pages of one set of transcription notes is sufficient (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The second independent coder and the researcher examined the whole transcript from the first Year 7 focus group together. With regards to the coding skills of the second independent coder, it is important to point out that she was also an EP who had ample experience in coding transcripts as she had carried out thematic analysis when conducting her own doctoral research study. An open coding process was used and a step called annotation was performed (Kurasaki, 2000). The annotations consisted of basic notes written in the margins that summarised the main points expressed.

3.18.2.2 Sorting the annotation list.

After some initial discussions, there was agreement about which were the most relevant annotations. The researcher compiled a list of these annotations, there were 60 in total. This list can be viewed in the first column of the table shown in Appendix 17 which shows the coding process. Through discussion a shared understanding of the meanings of the annotations was developed. The verbatim quotes from the transcript served as an example for each annotation in the annotation list.
3.18.2.3 Developing an initial code book.

A preliminary working draft of the code book was created. A few descriptive labels to represent the intended meaning of each code were written down. There were 31 initial codes which are listed in the second column of the table shown in Appendix 17. The next step was to pre-test the initial code book and remedy any problems with it. This process was much quicker after which the final revised codes were listed.

3.18.2.4 Establishing inter-coder reliability.

The revised code list was used to establish the degree of inter-coder agreement. The codes that each of the coders had assigned to the transcription using an agreement matrix sheet were compared (see Appendix 18). A response was considered to be coded the same only if both coders used the identical set of codes. For example, if one coder assigned the accessible, and ease of use codes to a response, the other coder had to assign the same two codes in order for there to be agreement. Presence of one or more disagreements, such as not assigning one of these codes, assigning a third code or different codes, was counted as a coding discrepancy.

The percentage of agreement was calculated by the number of instances in which the second independent coder and the researcher agreed divided by the total number of codes within the transcript, this formula produces the inter-coder reliability co-efficient statistic known as percent agreement (Krippendorff, 2004). There were a total of 95 separate student responses which contained 132 separate codes. There were 125 instances in which the both coders agreed agreed. The overall percentage of agreement was 0.94%.

The minimum acceptable level of reliability used was a coefficient of 0.70%. However, although percent agreement is relatively easy to compute and interpret, it does not correct for chance agreement between coders and can at times be overly liberal (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002).

It is worth noting that in general, qualitative methodologies do not make explicit use of the concept of inter-rater reliability and very few examples of it can be found in published accounts of qualitative evaluations. The reason for this according to Sykes (1990) is due to the nature of qualitative research methods: “that their inherent characteristics (their flexibility and the absence
of rigid experimental control) are not conducive to replicability” (p. 90). Some researchers argue that it is not desirable to strive for inter-coder reliability because differences among results of replicated qualitative studies completed by different investigators should be expected, given the dynamic and inductive ways in which qualitative researchers generate and interpret data. Instead, as Sykes (1990) and others (e.g., Erlandsen, Harris, Skipper & Allan, 1993) have suggested, the qualitative researcher should provide a complete trail that documents how the qualitative data were generated and analysed, this has already been clearly outlined in Sections 3.16 and 3.18.

### 3.18.2.5 Final List of codes.

After establishing inter-coder agreement the researcher used the qualitative data analysis computer package Atlas.Ti to manage and systematically code all three of the focus group transcriptions. Atlas.Ti’s functionality allows for systematic constant comparison of codes via the code manager system. The researcher was advised by her university tutor to list all the codes and their corresponding quotes together in a table. An example of four basic codes and their corresponding quotes can be viewed in Appendix 19. In total 36 basic codes were created from all three focus group transcriptions.

### 3.19 Part 4: Ethics: Principles and considerations

It was necessary to consider the ethical issues and dilemmas related to carrying out research alongside students within the real world context of working within a school. Before any research activities were undertaken, the project proposal had to be approved by the University Thesis Panel, this was granted on 16 June 2011. Ethical approval was also sought via the University Research Ethics Committee and this was granted on 30 January 2012 (see Appendix 20).

In terms of guidance around ethical issues, the researcher endeavoured to maintain the highest ethical standards of practice and gave due regard to the British Psychological Society (BPS) document ‘Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines’ (BPS, 2009) as well as the Health Professionals Council document ‘Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics’ (2008). A decision was made to follow the specific framework set out by the University Of Manchester in the document titled: School Of Education: Ethical Practice Policy and Guidance (University of Manchester, 2011-2012). This framework outlines seven principles of ethical practice which are discussed below.
3.19.1 Respect for human dignity.

When planning, conducting and reporting on the findings, it was important to be mindful and sensitive to any possible significant differences between the participants and the researcher. Before administering the questionnaires or conducting the focus group discussions the researcher always allowed time for introductions and an informal chat. The purpose of which was to reassure students that any undue stress or anxiety felt amongst them was not intended. It is also important to highlight that the researcher was not the substantive EP allocated to the school where the research was carried out. Hence, her role as an EP and a student researcher was not compromised.

3.19.2 Ensure integrity and quality.

The researcher endeavoured to carry out research of the highest quality and made use of methods that were deemed appropriate for using when carrying out research with children and young people. Throughout the research process, a high level of supervision was received and the research design choice was understood. The data gathered from the research were analysed with the support of the researcher’s university tutor. Once the analysis was complete, members of the leadership team of the school where the study was conducted were invited to meet with the researcher to discuss the findings.

3.19.3 Respect for free and informed consent.

It was necessary to provide staff, parents and students with appropriate information about the research aims, process, purpose and the potential use of the information gathered from the research. Before the research was carried out, meetings with specific members of staff at the school such as the assistant headteacher, PSOs and heads of Year were held and details of the proposed research were outlined. Once final arrangements for the research had been established, the heads of Year informed Year 7 and Year 10 staff about the intended research. The researcher’s LA email address (which is operated through a secure and encrypted account) was also given to the aforementioned staff. This ensured that staff had an appropriate and accessible way of keeping in contact with the researcher. An information/consent sheet was also posted out to the parents of all Year 7 and Year 10 students. Lastly, before the administration of the questionnaire or focus group discussions students were given information about the research using an information sheet. Due to the fact that some of the students were below average ability and were likely to have had literacy/reading difficulties the information
sheet was read out aloud to the students. Students were encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification.

It was essential to obtain parent opt-out consent for the administration of the questionnaires. This is because it was anticipated that there would be a low return of opt-in parent consent slips which would mean a small participation sample. The advantages and disadvantages of obtaining parent opt-out consent were discussed with the panel members of the University Research Ethics Committee and its use was approved. As a precaution, several safeguarding and ethical features were implemented; the specificities of these are discussed in more detail in Section 3.19.7. Furthermore, it might be argued that it is better to surface the issue of cyberbullying and offer students the timely support they may need than not raise the issue at all. It is also worth highlighting that the schools involved in the pilot and main study have a good pastoral care system. PSOs, form tutors, heads of Year and staff in the SEN department were available to offer students support.

In contrast to the questionnaire, opt-in parental consent for the administration of the focus group discussions was obtained. Written and opt-in assent was also obtained directly from the students on the days that the questionnaire and focus group discussions were administered. All students were assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time should they wish to do so.

3.19.4 Respect for vulnerable persons.

Respect for human dignity and ethical obligations towards vulnerable persons were maintained. None of the participants in the research had severe or complex learning needs and were therefore deemed as competent in understanding the nature and aims of the research and having the ability to make decisions. Throughout the research participants’ understanding of the research process and their willingness to participate was continually checked.
3.19.5 Respect for privacy and confidentiality.

All the students were reassured that their answers would be treated in the strictest confidence and, would be reported in an anonymised form. However, due to the sensitive nature of the research being carried out, there was also an awareness that some child protection issues may arise. Thus, it was important that issues of confidentiality were made clear to the students. In line with LA and EPS policies students were made aware that unconditional confidentiality could not be offered. If any student mentioned anything that implied that they were not safe, confidentiality would have to be broken. However, the children were reassured that if confidentiality had to be broken they would be informed first and supported as appropriate. None of the students raised any child protection issues.

3.19.6 Participation should be voluntary.

No pressure was placed on any of the participants or the school to participate in the study. All participants were informed of the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. No incentives for participating in the study were offered.

3.19.7 Procedures should avoid harm.

The research was conducted in a way that minimised harm or risk to the research participants. Awareness of the sensitive nature of cyberbullying was considered and specific ethical features were implemented to minimise any potential risks to students’ psychological well-being. As mentioned previously in Section 3.7, during the questionnaire administration students were split into small groups and two adults were present in each group. Small groups aimed to offer a safer and more secure environment for the students. It also meant that space was available to seat the students apart from each other so that they were unable to see each others’ responses. The reason behind having two adults in the room was so that an adult would be available to withdraw an upset or distressed student from the room and provide the necessary care and support that may be required. None of the students showed any outward signs of distress or requested to be withdrawn from completing the questionnaire. Hence, the adults available in the room were not required to withdraw and provide support to any of the students.
On completion of the questionnaire and focus groups discussion, students were given a sheet to complete and were asked to indicate whether they would like the opportunity to speak to one of the PSOs in private about any unpleasant cyber incidents they had experienced that may be upsetting or worrying them. Students were also informed about alternative sources of assistance as an information sheet listing useful websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues was provided. The researcher was aware that the study could potentially uncover undesirable findings. For instance, there was always the prospect of students revealing that cyberbullying was in fact an issue in school which may well according to students be addressed inadequately by staff. If this did occur, the researcher would have to be mindful of the sensitive manner in which this information was presented to school leadership and offer positive ways forward. The research findings would also be of interest to the LA anti-bullying groups, anonymity of the data would ensure that the origin of the findings would remain confidential.

### 3.20 Operational risk analysis.

Six operational risks were identified and are summarised in Table 3.6 below.

#### Table 3.6 Operational risk analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Contingency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with recruitment of participants for the questionnaire</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Assistant headteacher who was a member of the anti-bullying strategy group had suggested that the research be carried out in the school where she worked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key adults involved in the questionnaire administration being absent.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Two possible dates for questionnaire administration were arranged just in case of staff absence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher absence.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Two possible dates for questionnaire administration were arranged just in case of absence. There were opportunities to re-schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with recruitment of participants for the focus groups</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Students were asked to indicate on a sheet whether they would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion. They were given an opportunity to ask questions about what the group discussions may involve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties obtaining opt-in parental consent</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>School staff anticipated that this would be difficult. To ensure that the letters were received by students’ parents they were sent to the students’ home addresses. There was an extension of time in order to obtain opt-in parental consent. It took three attempts (3 months) to obtain sufficient consent slips from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet room being available to conduct the focus group discussions.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Unused rooms in the school in which to administer the questionnaires and conduct the focus group discussions were difficult to arrange. Specific rooms within the school had to be booked in the school diary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A time-line for carrying out the research can be viewed in Appendix 21.

3.21 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology that has been used to answer the study's research questions. The philosophical position within which the research was carried out has been described. The data collection methods, questionnaire and focus group discussions were detailed together with the analysis of these methods. The reliability and validity issues of each method have been discussed as well as important ethical considerations. The subsequent chapter presents the findings of this study focusing on the analysis from the data collection methods.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS: PHASE 1

4.1 Chapter outline

Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires during phase 1. Descriptive statistics provide information regarding the frequencies and percentages of students’ responses and horizontal bar charts are presented to help illustrate these findings. Inferential statistics using logistic regression analyses were carried out to answer research questions 2b and 4b. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results which provides an overview of secondary students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents.

4.2 RQ1: What are students’ experiences of using ICT?

In order to answer this question the following areas will be evaluated:

- Students’ accessibility to ICT, whether they own a mobile phone/Smartphone and whether they have access to the Internet outside of school.
- The number of hours per week in which students spend socialising with others using the Internet or their mobile phones.
- Whether students’ parents restrict the time they spend socialising with others using the Internet and/or their mobile phones.

4.2.1 Students’ accessibility to ICT.

Out of a total of 352 students surveyed, all stated that they had access to the Internet at home and owned their own personal mobile phone. With regards to Smartphone ownership, 77.6% (n = 273) of students stated that their mobile phone was a Smartphone giving them continuous access to the Internet without the need for a computer or laptop to be connected to the Internet at home.

Given the fact that the LA in which the school was located was ranked the fourth most disadvantaged in England (DCLG, 2010) such high figures of mobile/Smartphone ownership
and Internet access among young people were a little surprising. In fact, Smartphone ownership was higher than national estimates as in 2013, Ofcom reported that three in five teenagers (62%) owned a Smartphone; this figure is 15.6% less than that found in the current research. Seemingly, young people living in low income areas of England have very good access to ICT.

4.2.2 Number of hours per week in which students spend communicating with others using ICT.

It is difficult to measure exactly how much time youngsters are socialising with one another online. However, in order to determine the extent students engaged in virtual communication, they were asked to indicate approximately how many hours per week they used their mobile phones, Smartphones, or accessed online gaming and/or the Internet to communicate socially with other young people. All 352 students indicated that they socialised to some degree each week using ICT. In terms of frequency, it can be seen from Figure 4.1 illustrated below that a higher percentage of students (38%, n = 134) indicated that they socialise with others for approximately 9 – 12 hours per week and a lower percentage of students (7.4%, n = 26) indicated that they socialise with others for approximately 1 – 4 hours per week.
4.2.3 Parental restrictions on Internet use.

Students were asked whether their parents imposed any restrictions on the amount of time they spent communicating socially with others each week using the Internet or their mobile phones. The results revealed that over half of the students 57.1% (n = 201) did not have any time restrictions imposed on them. It is reasonable to suspect that some parents may find it difficult to balance the educational and social advantages of Internet use and the negative effects that some Internet content or contact might have on their children’s behaviour or safety. One factor which makes it difficult for parents to closely regulate their children’s Internet use is the rise of young people’s ownership of Smartphones. This device allows youngsters online access anywhere, 24 hours a day.

4.3 RQ2a: What is the prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students?

In order to answer this question the following areas will be evaluated:

- The different forms of unpleasant cyber incidents students encountered.
- How often students experience unpleasant cyber incidents.
- The variety of media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred.
- Where students are most likely to be when unpleasant cyber incidents occur.

4.3.1 The different forms of unpleasant cyber incidents students encountered.

Previous studies of cyberbullying have usually introduced a categorisation of cyberbullying based either upon the electronic device or media that is used. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the types of unpleasant online experiences youngsters are encountering, students in this research study were asked to indicate the actual types of actions, behaviours or tactics that had been employed. As far as the researcher is aware only two other studies by Mishna et al. (2010) and Price and Dalglish (2010) have explored a wide variety of young people’s experiences of specific cyberbullying behaviours. Hence, before mentioning the emotive words ‘unpleasant cyber incidents’ or ‘cyberbullying’, the research questionnaire first consisted of a series of questions that asked students whether in the last 6 months they had been the target of a variety of distinct unpleasant cyber behaviours. It is important to highlight
that the researcher is aware that questions worded in this manner may have yielded higher unpleasant cyber incident prevalence rates than a one off definition-based question.

Figure 4.2 below shows the percentage of children out of 352 who experienced different forms of unpleasant cyber incidents, the results are shown in descending order. The three most common forms of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced were as follows; 25% \((n = 88)\) of students had received messages or images that contained unkind and hurtful comments, followed by 15.7% \((n = 55)\) of students who had been involved in an unfriendly argument and 12.3% \((n = 43)\) of students stated that their enjoyment of online gaming had been spoiled because of deliberate problems that other gamers (griefers) had caused. The least common form of unpleasant cyber incident experienced was the public circulation/posting of private or personal information and/or images for others to see 5.7% \((n = 20)\).

Unkind comments and name calling was also the most common form of unpleasant cyber incident accounting for 27% of incidents in the study conducted by Mishna et al. (2010) and 80% of incidents in the study conducted by Price and Dalgleish (2010). The circulation of private information or images was the least common form of unpleasant cyber incident accounting for 7% of incidents in the study conducted by Mishna et al. (2010) and 19% of incidents in the study conducted by Price and Dalgleish (2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of unpleasant cyber incidents</th>
<th>Percentage of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received unkind comments/images</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griefing</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to spread gossip</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexting</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonation</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation of unkind..</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of harm</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social exclusion</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation of private info/images</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Forms of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced
4.3.2 Students exposure to unpleasant cyber incidents and the frequency of occurrence.

A total of 26% (n = 93) of students stated that they had experienced some form of unpleasant cyber incident within the last 6 months. Figure 4.3 below shows the different frequencies of occurrence of unpleasant cyber incidents. Out of the 93 students that had indicated that they had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident, 35.5% (n = 33) of students had only once or twice, 36.6% (n = 34) had several times a month and 28% (n = 26) had encountered unpleasant cyber incidents several times a week. None of the students indicated that they had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents on a daily basis.

![Figure 4.3: Frequency of unpleasant cyber incidents](chart)

Six possible factors were explored in an attempt to ascertain an answer to RQ2b: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents? Analyses of this data will be discussed later on in Section 4.7.
4.3.3 The variety of media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred.

4.3.3.1 Mobile phone media.

The questionnaire sought to determine the types of media through which students encounter unpleasant cyber incidents. Specifically referring to mobile phone media, an overwhelming 82.8% (n = 77) out of the 93 students who had indicated that they had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident disclosed that they had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident via Smartphone instant messenger. Many students attending the school in which the research was carried out used BlackBerry or iPhone Smartphones. These Smartphones have an Internet-based instant messenger application that allows messaging between BlackBerry or iPhone users. Students often exchanged messages with groups of people, allowing multiple BlackBerry or iPhone devices to communicate in a single session. Notably, unkind comments or images can be quickly circulated via this method. The rise in popularity of Smartphones as well as the high percentage of students reporting experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents via Smartphone instant messenger provides a timely reminder that an awareness of all media through which young people are interacting and where cyberbullying might take place is important. In contrast, a lower percentage of students 36.6% (n = 34) had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident via a phone call or voicemail. Figure 4.4 below shows the different mobile phone media through which students experienced unpleasant cyber incidents.

![Figure 4.4: Mobile phone media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred](image-url)
4.3.3.2 Internet media.

The popularity and usage of different Internet media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occur varies. The 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident were asked to choose from eight different answer options and more than one option could be selected. Figure 4.5 on the following page shows the percentages of different Internet media through which students experienced unpleasant cyber incidents. The social networking site (SNS) Facebook was the most common Internet medium through which unpleasant cyber incidents were experienced (60.2%, n = 56).

Facebook which was launched in 2004, has become one of the largest social networking sites in the world, in fact, as of September 2012, it had over one billion active users, more than half of whom use Facebook on a mobile phone device such as a Smartphone (Fowler, 2012). Cyberbullying behaviours are likely to vary between the different types of media this is because of factors such as functionality, intended audience and purpose. Unlike other media, Facebook has a variety of functions, it allows users to contact and stay connected to friends online, publically share their thoughts and opinions, as well as share snippets of their lives by regularly updating their status or profile page with, photos, videos and links to other sites that they found interesting or amusing. With this in mind, Facebook is likely to be deemed as a desirable medium through which to cyberbully people.

What is remarkable is the fact that 56.6% (n = 30) of Year 7 students aged 11-12 years, disclosed that they had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents via Facebook. It is apparent that in order to meet online social network organisations’ minimum age requirement of at least 13 years of age, a high number of young people are creating Facebook accounts/profiles by being untruthful about their birth date.
4.3.4 Where students are when unpleasant cyber incidents occur.

Previous research studies on cyberbullying have concluded that a vast amount of negative communication between young people in cyberspace occurs outside of school hours (e.g. Smith et al., 2008). However, for safety and communication purposes many parents actively encourage their children to take their mobile phones/Smartphones into school. At the time the research was carried out, the secondary school which the students attended had not banned the use of mobile phones in school and it was clearly visible to the researcher that the majority of youngsters had in their possession many ICT devices such as mobile phones, Smartphones, iPods and iPads. Thus, young people had the tools to carry out negative cyber interactions in school should they wish to do so.

In order to find out the extent of negative cyber communications being experienced on school premises students were asked to state where they were when unpleasant cyber incidents had occurred. A total of 37.7% (n = 35) of students had only experienced unpleasant cyber incidents whilst away from the school premises. In contrast, 20.4% (n = 19) of students had encountered unpleasant cyber incidents solely whilst on the school premises and 41.9% (n = 39) of students had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents both on and away from the school premises. This means that a total of 62.3% of students had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents at some point whilst on school premises which suggests that students are equally at risk of experiencing cyberbullying whilst at school.
4.4 RQ3: Do those students who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?

In order to answer this question the following areas will be evaluated:

- Students’ awareness of the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents; and
- Whether students are targeted by the same person in cyberspace and real life.

4.4.1 Students’ awareness of the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents.

The relationship between those students who have been the target of unpleasant cyber incidents and their aggressor merits some attention. Most youngsters who are being bullied via non-cyber forms of bullying usually know the identity of the person targeting them. However, in the case of cyberbullying, the identity of the person carrying out unpleasant cyber behaviours is not always known. In fact anonymity has been suggested as a factor that makes cyberbullying a unique phenomenon resulting in different challenges to non-cyber forms of bullying (Kowlaski et al., 2008). On the other hand, other researchers suggest that cyberbullying may be an extension of non-cyber forms of bullying, thus students may actually know the identity of the person carrying out these negative cyber behaviours (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). To uncover whether anonymity is a common aspect in cyberbullying, students were asked to indicate whether they usually knew the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents. Figure 4.6 presented on the next page shows that a total of 64.5% \((n = 60)\) of students actually knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them. The results suggest that although anonymity may compel certain individuals to use electronic devices to bully, the opportunity for anonymous communication is not seized by all who carry out these behaviours.
4.4.2 Are students targeted by the same person in real life?

Ybarra, Diener-West and Leaf (2007) emphasise that many students who have experienced cyberbullying have not faced bullying via non-cyber forms of bullying. However, it is likely that a young person may be targeted by the same person in both real-life and in cyberspace. In an attempt to investigate this further, students were asked whether the person(s) targeting them through ICT was also responsible for making any unkind or threatening comments directly to their face when at school or out in the community. All of those students who knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them in cyberspace stated that they had also been directly targeted by the same person(s) in real life. This finding certainly contradicts the claims made by Ybarra et al. (2007). Perhaps in the past non-cyber bullies and cyberbullies were distinct, disparate populations. However, we are now seeing those individuals who carry out bullying behaviours in the real world using electronic communications to extend and expand their reach which serves to increase the number of bullying incidents young people are at risk of encountering.
4.5 RQ4a: How many students self-identify as having been the target of cyberbullying?

Out of a total of 352 students, 26% (n = 93) stated that they had experienced some form of unpleasant cyber incident within the last 6 months. Because of young people’s increasing access to ICT, it is not surprising that unpleasant cyber incidents are being encountered. However, what researchers might want to consider is whether young people consider such incidents as cyberbullying? Importantly, rather than deciding for the students themselves as to whether their experiences constitute cyberbullying, the study’s questionnaire asked those students that had encountered unpleasant cyber incidents ‘do you consider yourself to have been the target of cyberbullying?’ Just over a half of the 93 students (50.5%, n = 47) did consider themselves to have been cyberbullied, which is approximately 13% of the 352 students who participated in the study.

In the literature definitions cyberbullying are usually based on the definition of non-cyber forms of bullying proposed by Dan Olweus (1993). Fundamental aspects such as, intentional harm, repetition over time and a power imbalance between the person being targeted and the person carrying out the cyberbullying behaviours have also been included in definitions of cyberbullying. However, recently, there have been questions as to whether these criteria are applicable (Nocentini et al., 2010). A common argument against the use of the criterion of repetition is the fact that a single unpleasant cyber incident can be forwarded or circulated which leads to countless incidents of victimisation (Dooley et al., 2009). The specific aspect of repetition in terms of the frequency of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by young people and the likelihood of them self-identifying as having been cyberbullied was investigated within this research study. In addition to this four other predictive factors were explored. Section 4.8 will provide answers to RQ4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
4.6 RQ5: When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do young people go to confide in and seek help?

In order to answer this question the following areas will be explored:

- The range of people and/or services pupils notified.
- Reasons why students do not confide in a member of staff at school.

4.6.1 The range of people and/or services students notified.

Adults generally encourage students who are the target of bullying to report incidents to teachers or parents. This has had some degree of success with non-cyber forms of bullying although older pupils and boys are usually less willing to inform adults about their experiences of bullying (Smith & Shu, 2000). The final parts of the questionnaire enquired whether students were proactive in reporting unpleasant cyber incidents and from whom were they most likely to seek support. The 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident were asked ‘have you ever told any of the following people or services about your experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents?’ There were nine answer options to choose from and students could select more than one option. Figure 4.7 on the next page reveals that students were more likely to report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to their close friends (64.5%, n = 60). It seems that talking to friends might be one of the first ideas that come to mind when thinking about what to do when experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents. A possible reason for this is the fact that friends have a strong influence on pupils’ emotional, behavioural and affective development and can help reduce anxiety (Bukowski, 2001). Perhaps the cost associated with asking friends for help might be comparatively low compared to other options.

The second most popular person(s) to be notified were parents (35.5%, n = 33). This is a much lower percentage than telling friends. According to Hoff and Mitchell (2009) possible reasons for students’ reluctance in telling parents are; youngsters fear of having access to their technology devices restricted and youngsters believing that parents are less aware of cyberbullying as a problem and therefore expect that their parents would simply recommend ignoring the situation.
It is not uncommon for anti-bullying policies to make explicit statements that encourage student reporting of bullying, or draw in bystanders to report bullying that they have witnessed. Statements like this do not seem to recognise how difficult this may be for most students. Data evidence from this study suggests that high expectations placed on students to inform staff are still not having the desired effect. Despite students being encouraged in e-safety lessons to report incidents of cyberbullying to staff, less than a quarter (21.5% N = 20) had done. This result was not surprising because within student culture telling on another person has negative connotations. There is usually a code of silence among students and few want to break it.

None of the students that participated in this study stated that they sought support from the online peer mentoring support CyberMentors. The reason for this could be that students are unaware of the website. Thus, it would be reasonable to advise staff in schools to teach students about the availability of CyberMentors and how to use it. CyberMentors are young people aged 11-17 years who receive two days intensive face-to-face training from BeatBullying staff which gives them the skills and confidence to mentor offline (in their school or community) and online (on the CyberMentors website). The website is moderated both by BeatBullying staff and qualified counsellors between 8am - 2am every day.
4.6.2 Reasons why students do not confide in a member of staff at school.

The real-life accounts of cyberbullying incidents that the researcher has encountered working as an EP which were described earlier on in Section 1.1 were unknown to staff at school, that is, until the consequences on those being targeted had devastating effects. This is quite alarming, if staff at school had known about these incidents they perhaps could have intervened and more than likely prevented any negative effects from escalating.

Those students who had not reported their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to a member of staff at school were asked to indicate why. There were eight answer options to choose from and students could select more than one option. Figure 4.8 below shows the main reason stated for withholding information from staff was because students feared being labelled as someone who tells tales. Over half (54.8% N = 51) of the students gave this reason. Further confirmation of this was revealed during the focus group discussions. Closely following this, the second most common reason was students thought that telling staff would prove ineffective because staff would or could not do anything about it (52.7%, n = 49). Furthermore, 33.3% (n = 31) of students stated that they thought staff were too busy to be supportive. The least common reason for reporting incidents to staff at school was because students feared that their parents would find out and as a consequence restrict their Internet or mobile phone usage (11.4%, n = 18). Notably, students’ reservations about informing staff appear to be due to the fear of being accused by their peers as ‘telling tales’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for not telling staff</th>
<th>Percentage of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of telling tales</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling staff would be ineffective</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independently deal with it</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff would not be supportive</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not a big deal</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear retaliation from perpetrator</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear parental restrictions</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 RQ2b: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?

In order to examine the possible factors that might make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents a logistic regression analysis was carried out. The predictive values of the following independent variables were explored:

1. Age (Year 7 or Year 10).
2. Gender (female or male).
3. Whether a student owned a Smartphone (yes or no).
4. Whether students’ parents restrict the time they spend socialising with others using the internet or their mobile phones (yes or no).
5. Students’ academic ability (below average, average, above average).
6. Number of hours per week in which students spend socialising with others using ICT (0 hours, 1–4 hours, 5–8 hours, 9–12 hours, more than 12 hours – these original categories were collapsed to infrequent, frequent and very frequent).

4.7.1 Data preparation.

4.7.1.1 Checking distributions of the independent variables.

Researchers need to be aware that IBM, SPSS will have difficulty performing a logistic regression unless data from all categories of the independent variables have been collected. To check this, Field (2009) advises that researchers separately cross-tabulate the dependent variable with each independent variable to be included in the logistic regression model. Furthermore, Field (2009) recommends that researchers should check that the expected frequencies in each cell of the table are greater than 1 and no more than 20% are less than 5. This is because the goodness-of-fit tests in logistic regression make this assumption. Checking the distributions of the variables and the expected frequencies was carried out on all the independent variables that were to be included in the logistic regression model. On closer inspection of the research data it was discovered that data for all combinations of the independent variable ‘number of hours a student spends socialising with others each week using the Internet and/or mobile phone’ with the dependent variable ‘whether students had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident’ had not been collected. A decision was made to collapse and re-categorise the original categories within the independent variable.
The first category labelled as 0 hours was excluded because there were no counts collected for this category. The categories labelled as 1 – 4 hours and 5 – 8 hours were collapsed together and re-coded as 0 and relabelled as *infrequent*. The category labelled as 9 – 12 hours was re-coded as 1 and relabelled as *frequent* and finally the category labelled more than 12 hours was re-coded as 2 and relabelled as *very frequent*. To ensure that all the revised categories of the independent variable were combined with either of the two categories of the dependent variable a second cross tabulation table was created. There were enough data in each of the cells and the expected frequencies in each cell of the table was greater than 1 and no more than 20% were less than 5. Thus, a decision was made to include this independent variable using three categories rather than the original five categories.

### 4.7.1.2 Choosing reference categories.

The forced entry method for conducting logistic regression was chosen. This is when all the independent variables are placed into the regression model in one block, and the effects of all the independent variables are simultaneously evaluated. Because all the independent variables were categorical this was declared in the analysis and a reference category for each independent variable was chosen. The convention for binominal logistical regression is to code the category of greatest interest within the independent variable as 1 and the other category as 0, this is because the coding will affect the odds ratio and slope estimates. Table 4.1 shows the reference categories chosen for the independent variables. Hence, (1) shown next to each of the independent variables in the output results table will refer to the reference category within that independent variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Reference Category (1)</th>
<th>Reference Category (2)</th>
<th>Reference Category (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year group</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of Smartphone</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental restriction of Internet use</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic ability</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent socialising with others each week using ICT</td>
<td>Very frequent (more than 12 hours)</td>
<td>Frequent (9-12 hours)</td>
<td>Infrequent (1-8 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7.2 Data screening.

4.7.2.1 Iterative process and Hosmer-Lemeshow test check.

IBM, SPSS was able to estimate the parameters and complete the iterative process for the model successfully. A large percentage of the cases were classified correctly. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test checks that there is a linear relationship between the predictor variables and the log odds of the criterion variable. A Chi-square statistic was computed comparing the observed frequencies with those expected under the linear model. The Chi-square value for the model was non-significant at the .05 level indicating that the data fit the model well. Table 4.2 contains the screening information.

Table 4.2: Iterative process and Hosmer and Lemeshow test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion of iterative process</th>
<th>Proportion of cases classified correctly</th>
<th>Hosmer and Lemeshow test checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 steps</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.2.2 Collinearity diagnostics.

4.7.2.2.1 Tolerance and variance inflation factors.

The next step in the screening process of logistic regression is to test for multicollinearity. Field (2009) highlights that logistic regression is prone to the biasing effect of collinearity. Therefore, it is essential to test for collinearity between the independent variables following a logistic regression analysis. To do this one can obtain statistics such as the tolerance, and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF), for each independent variable by running a linear regression analysis using the same independent variables and dependent variable used in the logistic regression model. There is a set criterion for assessing collinearity. Menard (1995) cited in Field (2009) suggests that tolerance values less than 0.1 almost certainly indicates a serious collinearity problem and Myers (1990) also cited in Field (2009) suggests that a VIF value greater than 10 is a cause for concern. The tolerance and VIF values between the independent variables did not indicate any serious collinearity problems (see Table 1 in Appendix 22).
4.7.2.2.2 Condition index.

Examination of the eigenvalues provide information about how accurate the regression model is and according to Field (2009) if the eigenvalues are fairly similar in value then the derived model is likely to be unchanged by small changes in the measured variables. The condition index value is also another way of expressing these eigenvalues. Field (2009) states, if the range between the condition index values is not large then a collinearity problem does not exist. The condition index ranged from 1 to 8.68 which is not considered by Field (2009) to be a large difference (see Table 2 in Appendix 2).

4.7.2.2.3 Variance proportions.

The final step in testing for multicollinearity is to analyse the variance proportions. The variance of each regression coefficient can be broken down across the eigenvalues and the variance proportions state the proportion of the variance of each predictor's regression coefficient that is attributed to each eigenvalue (Field, 2009). In terms of collinearity, Field (2009) advises that the researcher looks for predictors that have high variance proportions on the same small eigenvalue, as this would indicate that the variances of their regression coefficients are dependent. Field (2009) gives examples of variance proportions considered as high are those above 0.90. High variance proportions for same small eigenvalues were not shown which indicates no dependency between the variables. Thus, all the collinearity diagnostic tests found no indication of multicollinearity for the independent variables included (see Table 2 in Appendix 2).

4.7.3 Examination of residual statistics.

The final step in the screening process is examining the data for residuals. Field (2009) states that to be sure that the logistic regression model fits the observed data well, it is important to examine cases that might be influential. To do this specific residual statistics should be examined.
4.7.3.1 Cook’s distance, DFBeta and leverage statistics.

There are several influence statistics such as Cook’s distance, DFBeta and leverage statistics. The Cook’s distance statistic is a measure of the overall influence of a single case on the model as a whole. The DFBeta statistic measures the difference between a parameter estimated using all cases and estimated when one case is excluded. The values of both of these statistics should be less than 1 (Field, 2009). Lastly, the leverage statistic, gauges the influence of the observed value of the dependent variable over the predicted values. Field (2009) states that, values for this statistic should lie between 0 (no influence) and 1 (complete influence). All the influential statistics fell within these set criteria (see Table 3 in Appendix 2).

4.7.3.2 Studentized and standardized residual statistics.

The second reason for examining residual statistics is to isolate points for which the model fits poorly in which the influence of particular cases can be assessed. To assess this, the studentized and standardized residual statistics are examined. Similar to the influential statistics, the values of residual statistics must meet specific criteria. No more than 5% of cases should have absolute values greater than ±1.96. No more than 1% of cases should have absolute values greater than ±2.58 and any case with a value above 3 is considered a cause for concern (Field, 2009).

With regards to the studentized residual statistics nine cases (2.6%) were greater than ±1.96, which is below the 5% threshold. Only one case (0.3%) was greater than ±2.58, which is less than 1% of the total number of cases therefore, there was no cause for concern. On examination of the standardized residual statistics, ten cases (2.8%) were greater than ±1.96 this was also below the 5% threshold. However, a total of nine cases (2.6%) were greater than ±2.58 and 3, which meant that more than 1% of the cases were outside the ±2.58 and 3 threshold. These cases were inspected closely to try to discover a good reason why they were unusual. It became apparent that these cases were the only nine cases that had indicated that they socialised with others using ICT infrequently (5-8 hours) and had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident. Table 4.3 shown on the next page lists the studentized and standardized statistics in more detail.
Table 4.3: Studentized and standardized statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Studentized Statistics</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Standardized Statistics</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.188</td>
<td>2.6% of cases lie outside ± 1.96.</td>
<td></td>
<td>349</td>
<td>1.982</td>
<td>2.8% of cases lie outside ± 1.96.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.078</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.303</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.086</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293</td>
<td>2.387</td>
<td>0.3% of cases lie outside ± 2.58.</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.532</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292</td>
<td>2.476</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3.954</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>2.490</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>292</td>
<td>4.412</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>2.490</td>
<td>No cases are above 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>236</td>
<td>4.524</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>2.514</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>237</td>
<td>4.524</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>2.638</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>4.672</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>327</td>
<td>5.498</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.4 Analysis.

The logistic regression coefficients, in the second column labelled ‘B’ in Table 4.4 on the following page indicate the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. One can see that the independent variable Year group has a positive relationship (0.77), indicating that Year 7 students in which the reference category is labelled as (1) are more likely than Year 10 students to experience an unpleasant cyber incident. The strength of the relationship is gauged by the odds ratio, shown in the ‘Exp (B)’ column. The odds ratio indicates how many times higher the odds of occurrence are for each one-unit increase in the independent variable. The odds ratio for Year group is 2.16 this means that being in Year 7 increases the odds of experiencing an unpleasant cyber incident by 2.16. The final step in the analysis is to check whether the relationship is statistically significant. The ‘sig’ column shows a significance level for Year group of 0.01. The probability that the observed relationship can be attributed to chance is very low and therefore it can be concluded that Year 7 students are significantly more likely to experience an unpleasant cyber incident than Year 10 students.

One can also see that the logistic regression coefficients relating to the independent variable ‘number of hours per week in which students spend socialising with others using the Internet and/or mobile phones’ also indicate a positive relationship. Students who socialise frequently (2.20) and very frequently (3.09) with others each week are more likely to experience an unpleasant cyber incident than those students that socialise infrequently with others. The odds ratio for students who frequently use the Internet or their mobile phones to socialise with others is 8.98; this means that students in this category are nearly 9 times more likely to experience an
unpleasant cyber incident than students that socialise infrequently. The odds ratio for those students who socialise very frequently is 21.99. Hence, students in this category are nearly 22 times more likely to experience an unpleasant cyber incident than students who socialise infrequently. The ‘sig’ column shows a significance level of 0.00 for frequently socialising (1) and very frequently socialising (2). The probability that the observed relationships can be attributed to chance is extremely low and therefore it can be concluded that the more time students spend socialising each week using the Internet and/or mobile phones the more likely they are to experience an unpleasant cyber incident.

In answering RQ2b: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents? Being in Year 7 as opposed to Year 10 and socialising with others frequently or very frequently each week using the Internet and/or a mobile phone are predictive factors that appear to make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents. Focusing on the values of the odds ratios indicates that the independent variable ‘number of hours per week in which students spend socialising with others’ was the strongest predictor in the logistic regression model. Table 4.4 below shows the statistical values for the logistic regression analysis.

Table 4.4: Logistic regression output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>B (S.E)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>95% C.I.for EXP(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-3.13 (0.53)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Year 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.77 (0.27)</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.26 - 3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of time per week pupils socialise with others using ICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Frequent (9-12 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.20 (0.55)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>3.07 - 26.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of time per week pupils socialise with others using ICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2: Very frequent (more than 12 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.09 (0.62)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>21.99</td>
<td>6.55 - 73.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .17$ (Hosmer and Lemeshow), .17 (Cox & Snell), .25 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2 (8) = 66.15$, p < .01.
The reference category is shown in the first and second parenthesis in the column labelled Independent Variable.
4.8 RQ4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

A second logistic regression was conducted in order to examine the possible factors that might make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. The predictive values of the following independent variables were included:

1. Age (Year 7 or Year 10).
2. Gender (female or male).
3. Students’ academic ability (below average, average, above average).
4. Frequency with which the unpleasant cyber incident(s) occurred over the past 6 months (never, once or twice, several times a month, several times a week, everyday - these original categories were collapsed to infrequent and frequent).
5. Emotional response experienced when an unpleasant cyber incident occurred (took it as a joke, ignored it, a little upset, very upset - these original categories were collapsed to not upset and upset).

4.8.1 Data preparation.

4.8.1.1 Checking distributions of the independent variables.

Data for all combinations of the two independent variables ‘frequency with which the unpleasant cyber incident occurred’ and ‘emotional response experienced when an unpleasant cyber incident occurred’ with the dependent variable ‘whether students self-identify as having been cyberbullied’ had not been collected. The original categories within the independent variable ‘frequency with which the unpleasant cyber incident occurred’ were collapsed and re-categorised. The first category labelled as 0 hours and the last category labelled everyday were both excluded because there were no counts collected for either of these categories. The categories labelled as once or twice and several times a month were collapsed together and re-coded as 0 and relabelled as infrequent. The category originally labelled as several times a week was re-coded as 1 and relabelled as frequent. In addition, the original categories within the independent variable ‘emotional response experienced when an unpleasant cyber incident occurred’ were collapsed and re-categorised. The first two categories labelled as took it as a joke and ignored it were collapsed and re-coded as 0 and relabelled as not upset. The categories labelled as a little upset and very upset were collapsed and re-coded as 1 and relabelled as upset. Checking the distributions of the variables and the expected frequencies was carried out on both of the newly re-coded independent variables. There was enough data in each of the cells and the expected frequencies in each cell of the table was greater than 1 and
no more than 20% were less than 5. Thus, a decision was made to include the newly re-coded independent variables.

### 4.8.1.2 Choosing reference categories.

As mentioned earlier in Section 4.7.1.2, the convention for binominal logistical regression is to code the category of greatest interest within the independent variable as 1 and the other category as 0, this is because the coding will affect the odds ratio and slope estimates. Table 4.5 shows the reference categories chosen for the independent variables. Hence, (1) shown next to each of the independent variables in the output results table will refer to the reference category within that independent variable.

**Table 4.5: Reference categories chosen for each independent variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Reference Category (1)</th>
<th>Reference Category (2)</th>
<th>Reference Category (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year group</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic ability</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of which the unpleasant cyber incident occurred'</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Infrequent</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional response experienced</td>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>Not upset</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.8.2 Data screening.

#### 4.8.2.1 Iterative process and Hosmer-Lemeshow test check.

IBM, SPSS was able to estimate the parameters and complete the iterative process successfully (see Table 4.6 on the next page). The Chi-square values were non-significant at the .05 level indicating that the data fit the model well.
Table 4.6: Iterative process and Homer and Lemeshow test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion of iterative process</th>
<th>Proportion of cases classified correctly</th>
<th>Hosmer-Lemeshow test checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 steps</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.2.2 Collinearity diagnostics.

4.8.2.2.1 Tolerance and variance inflation factors.

The next step in the screening process of logistic regression is to test for collinearity between the independent variables. Statistics such as the tolerance, and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were obtained. Table 4 in Appendix 22 shows that none of the tolerance values were found to be less than 0.1 and none of the VIF values were greater than 10, thus, problems with the tolerance and VIF factor statistics were not indicated (Field, 2009).

4.8.2.2.2 Condition index.

The range between the condition index values were fairly similar and fell between 1 and 5.66 which Field (2009) does not consider as large indicating that a collinearity problem did not exist (see Table 5 in Appendix 22)

4.8.2.2.3 Variance proportions.

Field (2009) gives examples of variance proportions considered as high are those above 0.90. High variance proportions for the same small eigenvalues were not shown which indicates no dependency between the variables. Thus, all the collinearity diagnostic tests found no indication of multicollinearity for the independent variables included (see Table 5 in Appendix 22).
4.8.3 Examination of residual statistics.

4.8.3.1 Cook’s distance, DFBeta and leverage statistics.

All DFBeta statistics were below 1 and all the leverage statistics were between 0 and 1. However, two cases (99 and 120) had a Cook’s distance statistic greater than 1 (1.21 and 1.24) which indicates that these two cases may have influenced the model (see Table 6 in Appendix 22).

4.8.3.2 Studentized and standardized residual statistics.

No more than 5% of cases for the studentized and standardized residual statistics had absolute values greater than ±1.96. No cases had a studentized residual statistic outside ±2.58 or were greater than 3. However, more than 1% of cases (4.3%) had a standardised residual statistic greater than ±2.58 and 1.1% of cases were greater than 3. Despite the cases being inspected closely, a reason why they were unusual was not apparent. Nonetheless, the model is reasonably sound as one does not expect to obtain a perfect match between observation and prediction across a reasonably large number of cases. Table 4.7 below lists the studentized and standardized statistics in more detail.

Table 4.7: Studentized and standardized statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studentized Statistics</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Standardized Statistics</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Statistic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Case Statistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>-2.305</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>-3.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>-2.281</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-3.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>-2.270</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>-2.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>2.436</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3% of cases lie outside ±1.96.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3% of cases lie outside ±1.96 and ±2.58.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No cases lie outside ±2.58 or are greater than 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.1% of cases are greater than 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.8.4 Analysis.

The logistic regression coefficient, for the independent variable ‘frequency of unpleasant cyber incident’, had a positive relationship (2.14). This indicates that students who frequently experience unpleasant cyber incidents for which the reference category is labelled as (1) are more likely than students who infrequently experience unpleasant cyber incidents to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. The odds ratio, shown in the ‘Exp (B)’ column is 8.47. This means that students who frequently experience unpleasant cyber incidents are just over 8 times more likely than students who infrequently experience unpleasant cyber incidents to perceive themselves as having been cyberbullied. The ‘sig’ column shows a significance level of .02. The probability that the observed relationship can be attributed to chance is very low and therefore it can be concluded that pupils who frequently experience unpleasant cyber incidents are more likely to classify themselves as having been cyberbullied.

One can also see that the logistic regression coefficients relating to the independent variable ‘emotional response’ has a positive relationship (5.39). This indicates that students who feel upset about the unpleasant cyber incidents they experience are more likely than students who do not feel upset to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. The odds ratio, shown in the ‘Exp (B)’ column is 219.59 this indicates that students who find the experience upsetting are 219 times more likely than those students who do not feel upset to perceive themselves as having been cyberbullied. Lastly, the ‘sig’ column shows a significance level of 0.00. The probability that the observed relationship can be attributed to chance is very low and therefore it can be concluded that students who are upset by their experience of unpleasant cyber incidents are more likely to classify themselves as having been cyberbullied.

In answering RQ4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied? Experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents frequently as opposed to infrequently is a predictive factor that appears to make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. Therefore, it could be argued that the aspect of repetition would be deemed as a relevant criterion to include in the definition of cyberbullying. Feeling upset by the incident was also a predictive factor that appears to make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. Focusing on the values of the odds ratios indicates that the independent variable ‘emotional response to the unpleasant cyber incident’ was the strongest predictor. It could be argued that it may be appropriate to include this additional aspect in the definition of cyberbullying. The statistical values for the logistic regression analysis are provided in Table 4.8 on the next page.
Table 4.8: Logistic regression output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>B (S.E)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B) Odds ratio</th>
<th>95% C.I. for EXP(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-5.22 (1.71)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of experience of unpleasant cyber incident</td>
<td>2.14 (0.93)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Frequent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional response to the cyber incident</td>
<td>5.39 (1.41)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>219.59</td>
<td>13.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1: Upset</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .60$ (Hosmer and Lemeshow), .55 (Cox & Snell), .74 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2 (6) = 75.01$, p < .01.
The reference category is shown in the second parenthesis in the column labelled Independent Variable.

4.9 Summary of the quantitative findings

The results confirmed firstly the claim of Livingstone, Haddon, Gorzig and Olafsson (2011) that ICT is deeply embedded in children’s lives and indeed highlights how the ownership and use of technology is pervasive even among young people from the most socially deprived areas of England. All the students stated that they had access to the Internet at home and owned their own personal mobile phone. Smartphone ownership was popular, 77.6% of students owned a Smartphone. This figure was actually 15.6% higher than national estimates stated in the 2013 Ofcom report. Out of a total of 352 students surveyed, over half of the students admitted to spending more than 9 hours a week communicating socially online with 57.1% of students having no time restrictions imposed on them by their parents.

In the past, categorisation of cyberbullying has been based on a global question about cyberbullying or questions about the electronic device used or the media used to carry out the cyberbullying. For this study, these categorisations were abandoned on the basis that it is difficult to provide a definition of cyberbullying which clearly underpins the construct and reflects the ongoing changes in device usage, and media used to carry out cyberbullying. As an alternative, this study set out to obtain data about; (a) the prevalence and extent to which students encounter different forms of unpleasant cyber communications and (b) the prevalence and extent to which students self identify as having been cyberbullied. The data analysis showed that just over a quarter (26%) of the students who completed the questionnaire indicated that they had been exposed to one or more forms of unpleasant cyber incidents in the last 6 months. The most common form of unpleasant cyber incident students encountered was that of unkind comments and name calling which accounted for 25% of students. Interestingly, out of ten different forms of unpleasant cyber incidents provided in the questionnaire the two
forms of unpleasant cyber communications rarely investigated in previous studies such as grieving which is commonly experienced by gamers and sexting, were the third and fifth most common unpleasant cyber incidents students encountered. From the 93 students who had encountered negative cyber incidents just over half (50.5%) classified their experiences as cyberbullying. The findings suggest that many students navigate through cyberspace safely and nearly half who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents state they are unaffected by it. On the other hand, there are students who are experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents some of whom classify themselves as having been cyberbullied. The key question is what makes some students more susceptible to these experiences.

This study also set out to investigate; (c) factors which made students more susceptible to experiencing forms of unpleasant cyber communications and (d) factors which made students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied. Out of the six possible predictive factors explored, two accounted for students’ susceptibility to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents. Students in Year 7 as opposed to Year 10 were more than twice as likely to experience unpleasant cyber incidents. However, time spent socialising with others via the Internet and/or a mobile phone was the strongest predictive factor. Students were more than eight times as likely to experience an unpleasant cyber incident if they engaged in socialising frequently each week (9 – 12 hours). Those students who socialised very frequently each week (more than 12 hours) were more than 21 times as likely to encounter unpleasant cyber communications.

With regards to the likelihood of students self-identifying as having been cyberbullied, five possible predictive factors were explored. The two predictive factors that were statistically significant were the frequency with which the unpleasant cyber incident occurred and students’ perceived emotional response to the cyber incident. Those students who had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents frequently (several times a week) were more than eight times as likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied than those students who experienced unpleasant cyber incidents infrequently (once or twice or several times a month). The emotional response experienced when an unpleasant cyber incident occurred was the strongest predictor. Those students who stated that they were upset were over 219 times more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied.

Researchers such as Cassidy et al. (2009) have argued that students experience non-cyber forms of bullying at school and this is carried over into online exchanges at home. Thus, the prevalent view is that cyberbullying amongst young people usually occurs outside of the school premises (Smith et al., 2008). However, this view originated from studies carried out prior to the widespread availability and ownership of devices such as Smartphones. The results from this
particular study found that 62.3% of students had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents at some point whilst at school which contradict the claims made by Smith et al. (2008) and Cassidy et al. (2009). However, it is also important to be aware that many experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents are still occurring away from the school premises. In total 79.2% of students had encountered negative cyber incidents at some point whilst away from the school premises. The findings from the study demonstrate that students can be targeted wherever and whenever. Seemingly, cyberbullying is not confined to one setting and therefore it has no boundaries. This means that students can be targeted anywhere and at any time of the day.

It has been suggested that anonymity is a unique feature of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008; Menesini, Nocentini & Calussi., 2011). However, other researchers suggest that cyberbullying may in fact be an extension of non-cyber forms of bullying which means that young people may actually know the identity of the person carrying out the cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2009). To uncover whether anonymity is a common aspect in cyberbullying, students were asked to indicate whether they usually knew the identity of the person carrying out the negative cyber behaviours. The data revealed that 64.5% of students actually knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them. More importantly, all of those students who knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them in cyberspace stated that they had also been directly targeted by the same person(s) in real life either at school or out in the community. Hence the claim made by Ybarra et al. (2007) that individuals who use non-cyber forms of bullying are a distinct, disparate population than individuals who cyberbully may only be partially correct.

Advice from school staff and that set out in school anti-bullying policies tend to make explicit statements about students needing to tell an adult in school if they are being bullied/cyberbullied. Such a view places the bulk of the responsibility of reporting such incidents on those individuals who are experiencing it. However, research evidence shows that the reality is many students are reluctant to seek support or protection from staff in school (Cassidy et al., 2009; Holfeld & Grabe, 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2007). Analysis of the results from this study verified that of previous studies as the vast majority of students 64.5% sought informal help from their close friends and less than a quarter of students indicated that they sought formal help from staff at school. When students were asked to state reasons why they did not seek support from a member of staff, the most common reason given was that students feared being labelled by their peers as someone who told tales (54.8%). Closely following this, the second most common reason was students thought that telling staff would prove ineffective because staff would or could not do anything about it (52.7%). Furthermore, 33.3% of students stated that they thought staff were too busy to provide support. These findings certainly have implications for the way staff might try to address all forms of bullying.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS: PHASE 2

5.1 Outline of chapter

Chapter 5 will present the qualitative findings that were obtained during phase 2 of the study. First, two tables are presented: these tables outline the range of items which were generated from the three NGT focus groups. These items were produced in response to the research question what are students' ideas and views about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of cyberbullying to staff? The discussion of each item during the final stage of the focus group discussion enabled students to provide their opinions and ideas regarding what they thought needed to happen for these items to successfully operate in school. It is important to point out that during discussions, students provided their views and ideas about what needed to happen in school to support the reporting of both cyber and non-cyber forms of bullying to staff. Students’ reference to all forms of bullying is pertinent and maybe explained by the fact that many students who had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents also stated that they experienced bullying in the real world. The themes that emerged from these discussions are presented using thematic networks. Data extracts will be presented alongside the analysis in order to support each theme and demonstrate its prevalence. It is intended that through this approach a concise and coherent account of the findings from the data will be provided. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the results which provides an overview of secondary students’ ideas and views on how schools can actively encourage students to come forward to report bullying incidents to staff at school. A final point to highlight, is, the names of all students have been altered in order to preserve their anonymity.

5.2 Items generated from Nominal Group Technique

The students from all three focus groups identified a number of strategies or solutions that might encourage more students to come forward and report cyberbullying or non-cyber forms of bullying to staff in school. Overall, a total of 19 items were generated. Ten of the items were different reporting methods the other nine items were different approaches to raising students’ awareness about these reporting methods. Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 presented on the next two pages list these items along with the focus groups in which they were discussed.
It is important to highlight that it is common during the final stage of the NGT process to have a voting phase. During the voting phase participants are asked to select the three items most important to them and rank them in order of priority. The person facilitating usually collects participants’ rankings and tallies the results in order to determine the group’s priorities. However, in the context of this study, the participants of all three focus groups determined that prioritising the items was not necessary, and that all items should be weighted equally.

Table 5.1: List of reporting methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Method</th>
<th>Year 7 Group 1</th>
<th>Year 7 Group 2</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-bullying box</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-bullying phone helpline</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact designated members of staff through instant message/chat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School anti-bullying email address</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying report button on the school website</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to an online appointment system to arrange to meet with designated members of staff</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-bullying peer support group</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details and links to external support</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to members of staff who are trained in supporting students who are experiencing bullying</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Thematic networks

The discussion part of the NGT interview concentrated on the features of the items outlined in both Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Students provided details about how these items ought to operate in school and what would need to happen in order for them to operate successfully. A comprehensive explanation of the process involved in the analysis of the data has already been described in Chapter 3. During the process of thematic analysis, several common themes that students thought were vital to the success of these items emerged. A representation of all the themes is illustrated using the thematic networks shown in Figures 5.1.1 to 5.1.4 (these can be found on the next three pages). It is important to emphasise that thematic networks are usually “presented graphically as web-like nets to remove any notion of hierarchy, giving fluidity to the themes and emphasising the interconnectivity throughout the network” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.389). However, the thematic networks presented here are in a linear and hierarchical manner, solely for the purpose of presentation, that is to enable all of the thematic networks to fit neatly onto the subsequent pages.

In total four global themes were identified. The global themes head each thematic network and are located in the green boxes in Figures 5.1.1 to 5.1.4. Global themes provide information about what the text as a whole is about within the context of a given analysis. Each of the four global themes contains one or more organising themes; these are represented in the blue boxes. Organising themes are middle-order themes of which there are nine and each of these

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-bullying initiatives</th>
<th>Year 7 Group 1</th>
<th>Year 7 Group 2</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School assemblies</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters, Annual Year booklets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint presentations</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-bullying page on the school website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School anti-bullying campaign group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are constructed from several basic themes. Basic themes represent simple premises characteristic of the data; there are 36 basic themes which are located in the orange boxes.

**Figure 5.1.1: Thematic Network 1**

**Figure 5.1.2 Thematic Network 2**

**Key:**

- **Global Theme**
- **Organising theme**
- **Basic theme**
Figure 5.1.3: Thematic network 3

Key:

- Global Theme
- Organising theme
- Basic theme

Student expectations of adult support

Responsiveness of staff
- Availability
- Prompt response
- Benefits of a prompt response
- Repercussions of a delayed response

Removing barriers to reporting
- Preserving anonymity
- Barriers to reporting
- Relinquishing anonymity
- Protection

Expected level of support
- Teacher-student relationship
- Credulous listening
- No blame approach
- Tailored support
- Follow-up support
- Consequences

Status of designated staff
- Pastoral Support Officers
- School's PC: Jurisdiction
- Trained staff
Figure 5.1.4: Thematic network 4

Support from non staff

Peer support
- Regularly available
- Personal qualities
- Shared experience
- Age specific
- Adult supervision

Family support
- Support from older relatives in school
- Problems with family support

Key:
- Green: Global Theme
- Blue: Organising theme
- Orange: Basic theme
5.4 Thematic analysis of the data

Each individual thematic network will be discussed separately. Initially, a graphical representation of each network will be provided, following this an analysis of both the organising themes and basic themes within each thematic network will be given. In order to elaborate and contextualise the themes that derived from the data, direct quotes taken from the original transcriptions will be provided. This intends to give the reader a sense of understanding of how the themes arose. It is hoped that this will support credibility and trustworthiness of the analytic process that was undertaken.

5.5 Thematic network for: Anti-bullying work in school

This thematic network consists of two organising themes and eight basic themes.

Figure 5.2: Thematic network for: Anti-bullying work in school
5.5.1 Organising theme: Limitations of existing anti-bullying work.

Students’ past experiences of the different types of support they had received in school around all forms of bullying issues appeared to deviate significantly from their ideas about what they thought or would like to see happen. Limitations within existing anti-bullying practice in school were commented upon by students in all three focus groups.

5.5.1.1 Basic theme: Limitations of anti-bullying week.

Reference to Anti-Bullying Week featured nine times in the discussions. Students relayed their experiences and views about Anti-Bullying Week. This is an annual UK event which was first launched in 2004 by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) which is made up of 60 member organisations. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness about all forms of bullying and ways of preventing and responding to it. Despite staff efforts in delivering a variety of interesting and possibly fun-packed activities during the week-long event, students from all three focus groups voiced similar opinions with regards to the event’s shortfalls. Students felt it was ineffective in reducing the incidents of bullying in school mainly because it only occurred on the school agenda once a year. Staff interest in discussing bullying issues with students would usually cease once the week had ended and then resurface again during the next Anti-Bullying Week the following year or when a serious bullying incident had occurred. It is for this reason that students were of the opinion that Anti-Bullying Week was not effective in reducing bullying incidents between students. They felt that opportunities for open and ongoing dialogue between staff and students around the issues of bullying did not exist which was a possible factor in preventing students from approaching staff to report incidents of bullying.

Yeah, it's like the done thing. Once a year everyone talks about it for that week, then it's hardly mentioned again until the next year. (Teddi: Y7, FG1).

Well what's the point in doing it in just anti-bullying week? We always do that and hardly ever bother speaking about it until the next anti-bullying week a year later. So it's hardly going to encourage students being bullied to report it and the bullies just carry on as normal don't they? (Chloe: Y7, FG2).
Yeah that’s what usually happens, only doing stuff on it for a week is hardly gonna make a difference is it? (Zeta: Y10).

5.5.1.2 Basic theme: Lack of anti-bullying initiatives.

Some students from the first Year 7 and Year 10 focus groups were adamant that some of the current anti-bullying initiatives in school were inadequate and meaningless. In the initial stage of the focus group discussions, students thought carefully about the range of reporting methods that they would like made available to them in school (see Table 5.1). According to students, most of the ideas that they proposed did not exist within school. The importance of having access to a range of confidential reporting routes and different sources of advice was stressed, students also maintained that information about their existence and how to access them should be widely publicised around the school building. To the students’ disappointment, the only reporting route they knew of in school was seeking support directly from staff. They voiced their dissatisfaction with current anti-bullying efforts in school and highlighted the fact that engaging students in anti-bullying awareness raising initiatives was extremely rare. It was for this reason, students struggled to connect with or appreciate any existing anti-bullying work in school. They believed they should be given the opportunity to play an instrumental role in shaping the school anti-bullying agenda.

We have a school website but none of this stuff we’ve talked about is on it. We don’t have an anti-bullying page, nothing like that. (Callum: Y7, FG1).

No we don’t have loads of anti-bullying information we can access in school. (Teddi: Y7, FG1).

...you know we don’t have this kind of support available in this school. Well we don’t have any of these things we’ve talked about. It would be useful if we did. (Callum: Y10).

We don’t have all these ways of reporting bullying. You’re option is to go and tell the Pastoral Support Officer. That’s it, not much is it? We should be asked like.... what we need, like what we’re doing now. (Kayleigh B: Y10).
5.5.1.3 Basic theme: Inconsistency of staff.

The second Year 7 focus group had further ideas that related to teachers' inconsistent practice in dealing with bullying in school. Students spoke strongly about the fact that not all staff could be relied upon to help them therefore, approaching staff was not deemed as worthwhile.

No not really (consequences are not implemented), stuff goes on like name calling but sometimes the teachers don’t do anything they say ‘oh just ignore them’ and that. But they just carry on calling you. So then you think oh what’s the point in telling a teacher? (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

Yeah teachers deal with it (bullying) differently so like some teachers you just wouldn’t bother telling cos they wouldn’t do anything, well if they did it would hardly make any difference. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

...say like.... you tell your form tutor they just like..... tell these children who are doing it to stop it and that’s it! Nothing really gets done. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

5.5.2 Organising theme: Promoting anti-bullying initiatives.

Giving students the opportunity to reflect upon what they would like to see happen in school helped them to construct ideas about how to raise student awareness about bullying and how to take a stand against it. Comments were made on how to promote positive messages about anti-bullying and alert students to the pathways in place to support and protect them from all forms of bullying. Students stressed that the impact of anti-bullying work would only be effective if certain aspects were adhered to.
5.5.2.1 Basic theme: Student led.

Non-specific, adult-led anti-bullying type campaigns were deemed as ineffective and too generic. In order to overcome this problem and raise the profile of the issue of bullying, students recognised the importance of involving students. The following quotes evidence the basic theme of student-led anti-bullying initiatives.

Yeah like get the students to design the posters and that, get them more involved. Like they could help design a PowerPoint presentation for the school website. (William: Y7, FG1).

You could like… get students in this school to make a film or play about it … (Amy: Y7, FG1).

Miss everyone could get involved, not just those in the anti-bullying campaign group. Students could give out leaflets and flyers to students at break time with information about how to get help. (Josh: Y7, FG2).

..cos like... if it's kids designing the posters you know what they're on about. It will more like... stand out to students. I mean what's the point of having posters on the wall if no-one bothers to take any notice of them. (Heather: Y10).

5.5.2.2 Basic theme: Engaging students in discussion.

Students from all three focus group discussions talked about the importance of school staff encouraging students to participate and engage in discussions about bullying. Providing opportunities for students to engage in discussion about the different types of reporting routes and support available to them in school was also important. Ideally this open communication between staff and students would occur during assemblies or lesson time. The following three quotes refer to the advantages of having discussions about bullying during assembly.
Yeah there needs to be like proper discussions with students about how the school is gonna help students report bullying. Like what do students think would help? Assemblies are a good way of getting students to pay attention and find out who can help them. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

Cos most people will get to see it (assembly) it’s like all students get to see it and there’s like.... a proper discussion about it so like you can form opinions and ideas about it. (William: Y7, FG1).

Teachers can use these discussions to get our ideas of what we think will work in school. (Teddi: Y7, FG1).

Students believed that providing opportunities for them to be engaged in discussion about bullying would help raise the issue of bullying and therefore have a much deeper and longer effect than relying on literature alone such as posters and leaflets.

Yes talking about it (bullying) in class is a good idea, cos it’s no longer a taboo subject then is it? I mean it’s out in the open being discussed. (Heather: Y10).

Talking about it (bullying) and having a discussion is better than just looking at posters. It (discussion) gets students more involved in the anti-bullying cause. (Callum: Y10).

5.5.2.3 Basic theme: Taught within the curriculum.

Regularly scheduling and planning lessons on the topic of bullying featured in the discussions within all three focus groups. Participating in role-plays and discussions during lessons were viewed as powerful ways to engage students in thinking about bullying and helping them develop strategies to identify and report bullying.

Naomi, you could make a play or film in drama class so like we learn about anti-bullying in lessons. (Callum: Y7, FG1).
Yeah...you could also watch these films or plays in Citizenship lessons and learn about how to get help if you are being bullied. (Faye: Y7, FG1).

You could have a poster designing competition and students have a go at designing different posters in art class or something...(Callum: Y10).

You could use ICT lessons too. You could practise getting used to the anti-bullying page on the school website... (Zeta: Y10).

5.5.2.4 Basic theme: Sustainability.

Students were adamant that anti-bullying work carried out in school should never be considered as complete otherwise it would be forgotten about and only be raised again during anti-bullying week or when a serious bullying incident had occurred. A significant step in maintaining the impetus of such work was to ensure that it was innovative, ongoing and updated on a regular basis throughout the school year.

Raising awareness about bullying and who you can get help from needs to be going on throughout the year. (William: Y7, FG1).

Well like every term put new posters up or make new leaflets, change the PowerPoint presentation on the school website. (Holly: Y7, FG1).

Yeah cos you’re always gonna need to update stuff aren’t you. Like some teachers might leave and that, so you will have to put updated information about the new teachers to go and talk to and that. (Faye: Y7, FG1).

...so like school needs to do anti-bullying stuff more often so like people are aware of it and more things will get done about it. (Chloe: Y7, FG2).
5.5.2.5 Basic theme: Sharing the success of initiatives.

When discussing the use of assemblies, posters and annual Year booklets as tools to help raise awareness about bullying and how to receive support, students also emphasised the importance of discussions being relevant to the school context and student Year group. One way of ensuring relevance to the school context was transparency. Some students believed that each term staff ought to provide students with figures regarding the number of bullying incidents that had been reported by students in school. Some students also emphasised the importance of learning about whether these reported incidents of bullying had been successfully resolved.

...it (newsletter) could provide information on like how many bullying incidents have been reported and dealt with and that, or what the school is gonna do during anti-bullying week. (Holly: Y7, FG1).

You could have like success stories as well. Like some student from the school who got help and like say what they did and how it helped them. That will help persuade students to come forward and report bullying. Like try and keep it real. It’s no good using just like general posters that all schools use. No one cares or takes notice of them. (Lydia: Y7, FG2).

Yeah seeing success stories on posters or like on the school website would make students believe that if they report bullying things will turn out ok. Like... it’s worked for other students so it can work for them. It just makes it more real doesn’t it? I mean just seeing a poster saying tell a teacher hardly makes you wanna go and do it, does it? (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).
5.6 Thematic network for: Reporting routes

The thematic network consists of one organising theme and four basic themes.

**Figure 5.3: Thematic network: Reporting routes**

![Thematic network diagram]

### 5.6.1 Organising theme: Facilitating the reporting of bullying.

A number of ways of facilitating the act of reporting bullying either to a designated member of staff or to a peer support group were identified by the students. The importance of students being well informed about the various reporting routes available was highlighted. Reporting routes also needed to be easily accessible both in school and at home and straightforward to use. A number of students also emphasised the importance of being able to access support from alternative sources such as professionals from outside of the school setting.
5.6.1.1 Basic theme: Clear signposting.

Having access to detailed information about how students should go about receiving support was deemed as essential. Students participating in all three focus groups were of the opinion that this information ought to be visible and well promoted in school using a wide range of approaches. The following quotes are examples of students stating the specific type of information they would like to see on posters and leaflets displayed in school.

But... like... I think they should put the names of specific teachers that students from each Year group can go to and report bullying to in this book and it should tell you how to go about talking to these teachers (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

Like the names of staff that can help, where you can find em.... like put photographs of them on the posters and leaflets and that. How you could contact them. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

Another student highlighted how and why school assemblies would be valuable in signposting students to the right members of staff for support.

I’d like the trained teachers to be introduced to us in assemblies, like... who they are and how they’re gonna help us. Like which teachers would it be and how do we go about talking to them? That would be better than just telling us in form that these teachers can help you, here you are, now get on with it. Like... we need proper information. (Kayleigh L: Y10).

5.6.1.2 Basic theme: Accessible.

The importance of having access to various reporting routes was stressed. There was an expectation that students should be able to access reporting routes both in school and at home. The first quote is from a student who is discussing the accessibility of anti-bullying boxes in school.
Yeah if they’re (anti-bullying boxes) in lots of different places around school everyone can get access to them if they need to, can’t they? (Holly: Y7, FG1).

The second quote presented provides evidence of how information about reporting routes provided through the use of PowerPoint presentations would enable students to access information both at school and home. 

Naomi, PowerPoint presentations would be good because there is a TV screen on nearly every floor there is also one in the atrium and the reception area and dinner hall. Everyone would be able to see this information. The school website, put the Powerpoint presentation on the school website as well. Students can read all the information at home... (Amy: Y7, FG1).

The third quote refers to indirect reporting methods such as instant chat and email being highly accessible for students.

Yeah most students can access the Internet, even on their mobiles, so reporting bullying through instant chat and email would be a good idea. (Zeta: Y10).

### 5.6.1.3 Basic theme: Ease of use.

Knowing that reporting routes existed which were easy to use was a powerful motivator in encouraging students to make use of them. Text messaging and messaging via email and instant chat were considered easy to use because most students are familiar with and often prefer this method of communication. Students feared being labelled a ‘grass’ by their peers for reporting bullying incidents to staff. Therefore, students stated that they would prefer to report bullying to staff using indirect modes of communication such as the Internet and text messaging. The first quote represents an example of how an uncomplicated reporting method such as text messaging was favoured.
Yeah cos you might not have the courage to tell a teacher face to face so if you can text first to report it, then it’s not as bad cos texting is sometimes easier than saying it face to face. Like Kayleigh said everyone knows how to text... (Heather: Y10).

The two quotes below relate to using anti-bullying boxes. Students were of the opinion that writing and posting a short written message was neither time-consuming nor an arduous task.

Yeah, you don’t want to have to write loads do ya? You just wanna make it quick and easy for the student. (William: Y7, FG1).

So just posting a piece of paper in a box makes it quick and easy. (Amy: Y7, FG1).

5.6.1.4 Basic theme: Links to external support.

Several students commented on having access to support and information from alternative sources outside of the school setting. Reference was made to accessing outside support via Internet hyperlinks available through the school website. The purpose of these hyperlinks was to signpost and direct students to alternative sources of support.

If the cyberbullying and that is really serious then you would probably wanna talk to professionals in this field from outside you know..... better trained to deal with this kind of stuff. So yeah you’d need links to outside agencies. (Callum: Y10).

Naomi, like... there could be like an anti-bullying page on the school website which has the PowerPoints on and links to outside agencies that could help too. (Callum: Y7, FG1).

Maybe there could be a link to another website where you could talk to other young people ..... (Faye: Y7, FG1).
Contact information... I mean how to contact other groups or people that may help like... a link to their website or something. (Callum: Y10).

5.7 Thematic network for: Student expectations of adult support

This thematic network consists of four organising themes and seventeen basic themes.

Figure 5.4: Thematic Network for: Student expectations of adult support
5.7.1 Organising theme: Responsiveness of staff.

Students alluded to the idea that once a bullying incident had been reported, staff should be quick to respond in offering support as delays in response would affect students’ confidence in the whole process of reporting bullying incidents.

5.7.1.1 Basic theme: Availability.

Students were aware that school staff are not always readily available to sit down and speak with students about their concerns about bullying, mainly due to their busy work schedules. Despite this, students insisted that there should be sufficient numbers of staff available who had protected time to provide the necessary support students may need.

One or two (teachers) for each Year.... cos there might be more than one incident that needs to be dealt with at the same time. You don’t want to be waiting around for ages before you get help. You need staff to be available and not be too busy you don’t want them telling you to come back later. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

Well like.... often (availability of trained staff) or at least three times a week, like in break times or after school. (Callum: Y10).

You definitely need enough teachers so then they have enough time to support students. (Heather: Y10).

5.7.1.2 Basic theme: Prompt response.

Students from all three focus groups acknowledged that a guaranteed prompt response from staff was a motivating factor in reporting incidents of bullying.
Well like the anti-bullying boxes should be emptied daily, the emails and voice messages should be read and listened to daily. Things need to happen fast, they (students) need help fast. (Holly: Y7, FG1).

Yeah, then when the messages have been read the teachers need to be quick in offering help to the students they shouldn't leave it for days. (Amy: Y7, FG1).

Because if students are brave enough to report it (bullying) they shouldn't be left waiting around for a teacher to get back to them, they need help as quickly as possible. (Kayleigh L: Y10).

5.7.1.3 Basic theme: Benefits of a prompt response.

Several students referred to the benefits of staff responding promptly to reports of bullying incidents. The main benefits referred to were concerns and issues being dealt with and resolved in a timely manner and students feeling confident in the reporting process which meant that they were likely to use it again if they had to.

If it’s (anti-bullying box) emptied daily, the students who are gettin bullied will get help quicker won’t they? Hopefully things will get sorted quicker and the bullying will stop. (Callum: Y7, FG1).

Yeah it’s better to get help as soon as possible as then you’re gonna feel like you’re being listened to it’ll just make you feel better. (Chloe: Y7, FG2).

...so then they’re (students) not left feeling like nothings been done about it. (Heather: Y10).

...then students are more likely to make use of these reporting routes. (Callum: Y10).
5.7.1.4 Basic theme: Repercussions of a delayed response.

Students expressed their concerns about possible staff tardiness in responding to student requests for support. Reference was made to a backlog of work that would mount up if messages in anti-bullying boxes and emails were not checked and responded to on a regular basis. The accumulation of incidents to deal with would mean that staff would find it difficult to respond and provide students with the support they needed in a timely manner. Students were deeply concerned about the possible consequences of this. Prolonging the response would more than likely make those students who were being bullied, feel unsafe and overburdened with thoughts that no-one cared and this could lead to depression and even suicide. Ultimately it would leave students feeling despondent and believing that the reporting system in place served little purpose.

*If it (anti-bullying box) was only emptied weekly there could be lots of problems in the box. Staff would end up being really busy and the staff wouldn’t be able to get round to talking to everyone. So those students experiencing any kind of bullying wouldn’t get help as quickly as they should do.* (Faye: Y7, FG1).

Yeah, if you wait for a week and it’s really serious the person might commit suicide. (William: Y7, FG1).

...if they (students) don’t get the help quickly they won’t bother going to staff for help in the first place. (Kayleigh L: Y10).

Well if a teacher or PC ...... takes ages to contact you the bullying will just carry on and you’d be left feeling like no-one cares or is going to help. You’d be a bag of nerves wouldn’t you just waiting around for someone to help. (Zeta: Y10).
5.7.2 Organising theme: Removing barriers to reporting.

In total, the term ‘private’ was mentioned by the students on 16 occasions across all three focus group discussions. This related to students’ worries about being seen by other students approaching a member of staff to report a bullying incident. Reporting bullying incidents to teachers without other students knowing was preferable and enabling students to do this would perhaps encourage more students to report bullying to staff in school.

5.7.2.1 Basic theme: Preserving anonymity.

Students in all three focus groups raised concerns about preserving and protecting student anonymity. Preserving anonymity referred to students having the option to report bullying incidents without other students knowing, as this would help remove concerns about the possibility of retaliation from those individuals carrying out the bullying behaviours.

“You’d be better off posting it (message in anti-bullying box) when no-one is around to see you.” (Teddi: Y7, FG1).

“Or you do it (post message in anti-bullying box) like after school or when you go to the toilet in lesson time then you’re not likely to be seen doing it.” (Holly: Y7, FG1).

“Yeah that’s why I like the idea of instant chat no-one else has to know it’s like... private...” (Heather: Y10).

The importance of preserving anonymity was again evident in students’ thoughts when considering what happens when students actually meet up with staff to discuss bullying incidents that have occurred. Students expected staff to be discrete and approach students away from the view of other students.

“Well, like... the teachers shouldn’t come into class and ask to talk with them there and then in front of everyone should they? They should know better.” (Teddi: Y7, FG1).
Yeah, the teachers need to speak with the student quietly, not when everyone is around, like somewhere private where no one can see. (Callum: Y7, FG1).

Well you go to speak with a teacher perhaps after school or at break or something. You don’t really want to be out of class do you? People will want to know where you are and you don’t want people knowing your business. Reporting any bullying should be confidential... (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

5.7.2.2 Basic theme: Barriers to reporting.

Reporting bullying incidents challenged the inherent values of some of the behaviours the students were expected to follow by their peers. For students having their identities revealed and it becoming public knowledge that they had disclosed information about bullying to a member of staff was something they feared the most. They seemed to oscillate between wanting to tell and being fearful of telling because they did not want to be called a ‘grass’. The word ‘grass’ is a negative term used to imply that someone is an informant. In total, the term grass was referred to 10 times. Within youth culture telling on another student has negative connotations. According to McLaughlin, Arnold and Boyd (2005), there is an ironclad code of silence among students which no-one wants to break. Due to the fear of retribution including being labelled a ‘grass’ or ‘snitch’ as well as being hurt, ridiculed or excluded this code of silence predominates as an aspect of youth culture. Hence, students often succumb to the pressure to remain quiet and refrain from telling.

If other students find out you’ve told a teacher it makes the situation ten times worse as other people get involved and people will say you’re a grass. (Amy: Y7, FG1).

Well they (students) might not be confident to go (inform a teacher) at first cos they don’t want other students seeing them going cos if it gets found out they’ll get called a grass or a saddo. (Holly: Y7, FG2).
Some Year 10 students were of the opinion that even informing their friends that they were going to report bullying to staff was risky. The quote below is an example of how one student responded when asked the question ‘Would you not want your friends to know?’

*Not always, they (friends) could make it worse really, like tell other people, then the bullies would find out and things could get worse for you. They’d think you were a grass.*
(Zeta: Y10).

Another barrier to disclosing information about bullying to staff was the intense feelings of shame and embarrassment that some students felt about being bullied which prevented them from wanting to talk about it. Sadly, we live in a society where there is a great deal of stigma attached to being the target of bullying. If a person believes they are being targeted because of some kind of defect in the way they look, they are often too embarrassed to talk about it.

*Anyway it’s a bit shaming owning up to being bullied. It’s embarrassing telling about other people calling you names. You might just wanna keep it to yourself.* (Heather: Y10).

*I’m not sure if I’d have the guts to go and tell someone that I was being bullied. It’s something that’s personal to you, especially if you’re being called embarrassing names. Like how do you talk about that to a teacher?* (Lydia: Y7, FG2).

### 5.7.2.3 Basic theme: Relinquishing anonymity.

Students did not appear to embrace the idea of relinquishing anonymity. The possible tensions of reporting and not reporting bullying incidents to staff created a paradoxical situation from which students could not escape because of contradictory rules that exist. For example, rules enforced by adults in school, expect students to seek help and report bullying, whereas for children and young people when it comes to bullying, there is often an unspoken code of secrecy about bullying. Hence, students who are being bullied are often caught between the consequences of asking for help and the consequences of suffering in silence and weathering the storm alone. Only two students acknowledged that at some point their identity may have to
be revealed. This would usually occur when a member of staff had been given permission by the student to approach the individual who was carrying out the bullying in order to resolve the matter.

_No but it’s (relinquishing anonymity) ok if this (speaking with the student who is carrying out the bullying) has been agreed with the student who is being bullied. Like once they’ve talked it through with the teacher it might be the best way to sort things out._ (Holly: Y7, FG2).

_Some students might just wanna get things off their chest but others will want the teachers to help make it stop. So I guess eventually the bully is gonna know you’ve told._ (William: Y7, FG1)

### 5.7.2.4 Basic theme: Protection.

When reflecting upon the possible repercussions of relinquishing anonymity students had further ideas that related to being offered protection from those students who had carried out the bullying behaviours. This protection was in the form of a safe place to go during unstructured times such as break time.

_Like when the teacher is gonna talk to the bully, well the student being bullied could be given somewhere safe to go at break times so there’s no repercussions. If the student is scared perhaps it would be a good idea for the teacher to say what day they are gonna speak to the bully and that day the student could be somewhere safe during break and lunch time just so they feel safe._ (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

_.....if the student is scared perhaps it would be a good idea for the teacher to guarantee some protection from the bully. Like somewhere to go in school where they are safe._ (William: Y7, FG1).
5.7.3 Organising theme: Expected level of support.

Students stressed that staff who were responsible for helping those students who reported bullying should offer students specified levels of support. This support was deemed crucial in helping students resolve the problem.

5.7.3.1 Basic theme: Teacher-student relationship.

Some of the students stressed the importance of how a good teacher-student relationship was an integral element for students in terms of having the courage to disclose information to a teacher about being bullied. The following quotes evidence how talking to staff who are considered as easy to ‘get along with’ would help make them feel at ease and perhaps provide students with the confidence to approach staff and reveal what was happening.

Naomi you need to be able to talk to a teacher don’t you? (Holly: Y7, FG1).

Yeah you want a teacher that you feel you can talk to don’t you? Like one that is caring and you get on with. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

...you wanna talk to staff like that you know, that you feel comfortable with otherwise why bother? (Callum: Y10).

... the teachers trained should be kind and you should be able to trust them so you can talk to them. (Kayleigh B: Y10).

...like you know... understand where we’re coming from, like teachers who are friendly and listen and you can get on with. (Zeta: Y10).
**5.7.3.2 Basic theme: Credulous listening.**

Students regularly made direct reference to needing to feel listened to. Staff responsible for supporting students who were being bullied needed to be able to engage in active listening. Students also expected them to demonstrate their attentiveness by writing things down and most importantly they expected staff not to just listen to the facts that students conveyed but also acknowledge their feelings.

*Well first of all they (staff) need to listen and take you seriously. You don’t want them saying like ‘oh just ignore it and they’ll eventually stop’. That’s hardly going to help. It makes you think that they don’t care about your feelings.* (William: Y7, FG1).

*Yeah, they (staff) need to listen and should write things down so they get all the information they need so you don’t have to keep repeating yourself.* (Faye: Y7, FG1).

*Well the teacher listens to you and let’s you get everything off your chest.* (Holly: Y7, FG2).

*You need staff that will listen carefully and help and ask how you feel.* (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

**5.7.3.3 Basic theme: No blame approach.**

Students were keen for staff to suspend and withhold any prior judgements or assumptions that they may have about those students seeking support. They expected staff to be uncritical and not apportion any blame on students for the bullying they may be experiencing.

*...you definitely need to feel like they (staff) believe you, you’re not making it up like you’re not to blame.* (Faye: Y7, FG1).
It’s not your fault, you shouldn’t be made to feel like you’re fussing about nothing cos you genuinely need help. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

...you don’t want to be made to feel like you’re to blame for it, or like you need to change. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

...you don’t want them (staff) making you feel like you are somehow responsible, like..... saying ‘what did you do to them?’ (Elisha: Y10).

5.7.3.4 Basic theme: Tailored support.

Students’ willingness to engage in the process of reporting bullying was characterised by an acknowledgement that staff should tailor support at the individual level and that students should have some agency over any actions put in motion. Two of the quotes below also make reference to concerns about staff trying to resolve bullying incidents without first consulting with the student who is being bullied. This could ultimately lead to a further deterioration in the relationship between the student being bullied and the student carrying out the bullying behaviours.

Like different students might have different ideas about what to do about it. You can’t just do the same for everyone, each situation is different. It’s when teachers don’t listen and go off and do their own thing that can make things worse. (Holly: Y7, FG1).

Teachers need to make sure that you’re happy with what they plan to do, like you need to be in agreement with it. You don’t want them making things worse do you? (Josh: Y7, FG2).

You know like... plan with the student what they want. You don’t want them just going off and doing their own thing. (Holly: Y7, FG1).
5.7.3.5 Basic theme: Follow-up support.

There were several comments made about the importance of students receiving follow-up support from members of staff who were involved in supporting those students who were being bullied. Students stated that staff should check whether those students who had reported bullying felt safe and also enquire whether the bullying had stopped and ask whether further support was required.

You want to make sure it (bullying) stops, full stop. Like not just stops for a week and then starts again. The teachers need to follow things up and make sure you’re alright even after a few weeks you know like check up on you. (Holly: Y7, FG1).

Yeah I think that too. Like .... the teacher you tell needs to definitely come and find you, like after a week and make sure you’re ok and that. Cos if it’s still going on, well then you would need more help wouldn’t you? (Faye: Y7, FG1).

... like afterwards... the teacher could check in on the students everyday to see if they’re ok and make sure the bullying has stopped. They should be like..... looking out to see if bullying is still goin on, especially in areas in school where they’ve been told it happens. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

...they (staff) need to follow things up like.... you know keep you informed about things, check you are ok and make sure the bullying has stopped. (Heather: Y10).

5.7.3.6 Basic theme: Consequences.

Some students expressed their concerns that the consequences for those students carrying out bullying behaviours were not consistently implemented nor were they clearly publicised or severe enough to deter students from bullying.
You’d think they’d (bullies) stop if they didn’t like the consequences. Cos the consequences, like... having their mobile phone or email account and that confiscated well that needs to happen doesn’t it. The bully needs to know that the school won’t put up with it so you gotta have consequences. (Teddi: Y7, FG1).

The bullies need to know there are consequences. Like ... consequences will be carried out by teachers properly. Like if teachers took more notice and did more when they saw bullying like giving consequences to the bullies then everyone would start to realise that the teachers are serious and it’s not going to be tolerated. The bullies will get the message then and not do it as much. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

Erm like... proper consequences, like...the bully’s parents get told about it or their account gets cancelled. They should get detention and made to say sorry. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

5.7.4 Organising theme: Status of designated staff.

The strategies, commitments and interventions associated with reporting bullying incidents all involved to varying degrees the support of designated members of staff. The Pastoral Support Officers (PSOs), the school’s onsite Police Constable and staff who had received specific training on bullying were all identified by the students as being the ideal members of staff for students to receive support from.

5.7.4.1 Basic theme: Pastoral Support Officers.

At the time the research was carried out there were two PSOs allocated to each Year group in the school. A PSO has a wide range of roles but usually priority is given to working with those students who need the most help, especially those experiencing multiple disadvantages. The PSO supports students with a variety of issues, ranging from punctuality, absence, challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties. The PSOs in this specific school are known as having an over familiar social interaction style with many of the students hence, talking to a PSO was more favourable than talking to a class teacher and they were mentioned 19 times throughout all three focus group discussions.
...like the Pastoral Support Officers are good at listening and students would feel better talking to them than say a maths teacher cos they definitely listen more and will help you figure out what to do. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

Cos Pastoral Support Officers they like... help students and all that. They usually do that sort of thing in school rather than the teachers. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

Like the Pastoral Support Officers, they’re good at sorting out problems. (Callum: Y10).

Pastoral Support Officers like... they deal with like.... any arguments. They help you deal with what’s going on in your life... (Kayleigh B: Y10).

5.7.4.2 Basic theme: School’s PC: Jurisdiction.

The school in which the study was conducted had its own dedicated police constable. He supported school staff in dealing with any unlawful reports concerning the school, staff and students. He was mentioned nine times. Students believed he held a certain status within school and unlike school staff he had the jurisdiction to deal with bullying incidents specifically cyberbullying.

Because he is a policeman he will know things about the law and he can confiscate a mobile phone from the bully. He will also know how to get things removed from websites. (William: Y7, FG1).

My mate was getting bullied on Facebook and the people bullying him went round to the house and smashed his windows in. The police were informed and PC ..... got involved. PC ... could get involved when it’s really serious stuff, he knows the law. (Josh: Y7, FG2).
He can go onto computers and that... and see what students have been saying to you. I don’t know if that will help in anyway but he can see what’s been going on, and provide the evidence to teachers as like.... teachers might not be able to do this. (Kayleigh L: Y10).

Well if it (cyberbullying) was something really serious, like.... someone threatened you, like.... threatened to hurt you or like a member of your family. Well then you want more protection so it would be best telling the police as they can help you more outside of school. What can the teachers do to protect you outside of school? Nothing - they’ve finished work. The police though can monitor or like trace what threats you’re getting and go to the house of the person doing the cyberbullying and tell them to stop and warn them that they’ll be in serious trouble if they don’t stop. (Elisha: Y10).

5.7.4.3 Basic theme: Trained staff.

Students stated that there ought to be an established group of school staff whose role is to support students who are being bullied. It was important for these members of staff to have received some form of training by professionals from outside services specialised in anti-bullying practices. Students perceived those staff members who had been trained as having more credibility in being able to provide support to those students who reported bullying incidents.

It (email message) would go to certain trained staff who would deal with bullying incidents. They’d be like specialists trained to deal with it and would know what to do. (Amy: Y7, FG1).

If we had specific trained teachers in school students might feel more confident in reporting bullying to them as they will know how to deal with it. (Lydia: Y7, FG2).

I definitely think it has to be specific teachers who help with bullying. Like who know what they’re doing cos they’ve had training in it. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).
Yeah if teachers have some training they’re more likely to know what to do and how to help students. Like the support students get will be better planned won’t it? (Elisha: Y10).

5.8 Thematic network for: Support from non-staff

This thematic network consists of two organising themes and seven basic themes.

Figure 5.5: Thematic network for: Support from non-staff
5.8.1 Organising theme: Peer support.

Students were concerned that staff involved in supporting students who were experiencing bullying might have limited capacity to deal with reports of bullying in a prompt and effective manner. A further concern was whether the support staff could offer would actually be what they had in mind as several students believed that staff would probably be incorrect in their analysis of the situation and put things into action which could possibly make things worse for them. Hence, accessing support from their peers was viewed as an additional solution and specific requirements from such a group were identified.

5.8.1.1 Basic theme: Regularly available.

Students supported the idea of being able to access peer support groups in school on a regular basis. The idea of anti-bullying clubs only running once a term was viewed as ineffective and useless for those students who would need support.

Yeah they (peer support group) need to be more frequent than once a term cos you need help quickly, waiting for weeks would be too long. If they’re only on once a term students would just forget about the club and not bother using it, but if it’s on regularly at certain times then students will make use of it. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

Cos it’s (peer support group) no good like once a term is it? I mean if someone is being bullied they don’t want to be waiting forever to go and talk to someone, so they need to be on like once a week at least. So like Chloe said you could have two a week, one at lunchtime and the other after school. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

5.8.1.2 Basic theme: Age specific.

If students were to consider seeking support from a peer support group remaining within their Year groupings was important. Students commented on the fact that younger students would have different types of bullying experiences than older students therefore separate peer support groups based on age would be necessary.
...well you might want to speak with people your own age. (Faye: Y7, FG1).

Well you could have like one club but like different groups in the club. So like a group for like... mix Year 7 and 8 students together and like Years 9 and 10 students go and talk with another group. Cos Year 7s will probably experience different kinds of cyberbullying or bullying than say Year 11s. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

Yeah if I was being bullied I wouldn’t fancy going sitting with a load of Year 7 students. I’d probably wanna go and sit and talk with students that are nearer my age. (Zeta: Y10).

5.8.1.3 Basic theme: Personal qualities.

It was suggested that those students experiencing bullying might benefit from attending an anti-bullying peer support group held during lunch time or after school. School council members or Year group leaders were regarded as the most appropriate students to provide peer support because they were likely to possess certain qualities and skills required to support those students being bullied, namely trustworthiness.

Well what about the school council members or Year group leaders they’re sensible. (William: Y7, FG1).

Students who are good at communicating with others, like... good at listening and talking to you. You want them to be friendly so you feel comfortable going to them and telling them and you need to trust them to keep it confidential (Faye: Y7, FG1).

They need to be people who are reliable and you know they’ll do the job well. Like those who are good listeners and will listen to how you feel. (Holly: Y7, FG1).
Miss you could have students from the school council on the anti-bullying support group. Like Year 11 and 10 students they're sensible and can be trusted to help other students. (Kayleigh B: Y10).

You definitely need students who are trustworthy and sensible. You don’t want them making fun of you and then going telling everyone what you’ve said. (Zeta: Y10).

5.8.1.4 Basic theme: Shared experience.

Knowing they could talk to other students who had been through similar bullying experiences was a powerful motivator in encouraging students to seek support from their peers. Students were of the opinion that both students who were currently experiencing bullying as well as those students who had previously experienced bullying would be able to identify with each others’ feelings and emotions and this commonality would help in their understanding of each others’ needs. Some students also believed that their peers would have a better understanding about cyberbullying than staff in school. This was because cyberbullying was something most adults including school staff would be less familiar with.

Yeah like those students who have been bullied and have come through it ok could give advice and suggest which staff members would be best to go to. Like... they’ll be able to empathise better cos they know what it's like. (William: Y7, FG1).

Well students who are being cyberbullied or that have gone through any kind of bullying can get together and talk to each other and support each other, so they know they’re not alone. Students that have come through it can give advice to others and that cos they’ll know what it feels like. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

Some students might understand better than teachers especially those that have been bullied before. I mean they’ll know what being cyberbullied on Facebook is like... (William: Y7, FG1).
Students probably understand more about cyberbullying than teachers... (Callum: Y10).

5.8.1.5 Basic theme: Adult supervision.

Even though accessing a supportive peer group was identified as a positive thing, students were aware that in some circumstances adult intervention would be necessary. Students acknowledged that staff input would be required in order to supervise the smooth running of the anti-bullying peer support clubs as well as to provide direction. In addition to this, students were conscious that some of the more serious aspects of bullying would need adult intervention.

They’ll need a teacher leading it, like a teacher who gives them ideas about how the club should run and what sort of questions to ask and when a teacher needs to get involved and that. (William: Y7, FG1).

Yeah you’re right, you’re gonna need the support from teachers as well they need to be there to make sure things run smoothly. There could be some real serious bullying issues that only an adult can sort out. So they need to be around just in case. You can’t expect students to deal with the real serious bullying issues. (Amy: Y7, FG1).

They (staff) could help run it (peer support group) otherwise students might just mess about. Naomi ... there could be something really serious that a student is going through and a teacher needs to know about, anyway if things didn’t improve for some students then they would eventually need to tell a teacher to sort it out. (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

Yeah the teachers could train them and support them (peer support group). Like there should be teachers available at the club to sort out any serious problems and that. I mean serious stuff needs to be dealt with by a teacher. (Callum: Y10).
5.8.2 Organising theme: Family support.

During some of the discussions around accessing peer support, the topic of relying on siblings or cousins for support in school or parents at home arose. This posed a degree of tension as some students appreciated the support they received from family members whereas other students who did not have this kind of support were able to point out some of the disadvantages.

5.8.2.1 Basic theme: Support from older relatives in school.

Only two Year 7 students from the second focus group mentioned drafting in the support from older siblings or relatives in school. Older relatives were viewed as dependable allies in being able to offer protection and advice should they be needed. Although one of the students was quick to point out that not every student has the advantage of having older relatives in school to shield them from those individuals who bully.

*My sister is in Year 11 and she says if anyone bothers me to tell her and she will help me sort it out. She could help me tell a teacher. I also have an older cousin. But some people don’t have any older siblings in school to help them.* (Charlotte: Y7, FG2).

*It's good to have older family...* (Lydia: Y7, FG2).

5.8.2.2 Basic theme: Problems with family support.

Despite support from older family members in school being referred to as a possible solution to combat bullying, the majority of the Year 7 students in the second focus group were unenthusiastic about seeking support from family members, particularly support from parents. With regards to older family members in school, two students gave reasons why they did not agree to older relatives intervening. Both students were perceptive enough to realise the possible consequences. One student realised that an older sibling enforcing his or her will on the so-called bully in an attempt to protect his or her younger sibling could actually end up being
perceived as the bully themselves. The second student was of the opinion that an older sibling could not remain impartial on the matter and therefore a better option would be to involve staff.

Yeah I suppose there are disadvantages; it (involving family) could cause more problems cos the person the older siblings goes and has a word with could end up feeling bullied. (Lydia: Y7, FG2).

I've nothing against pupils who have older siblings but I don't think it's right how they bring them into an argument between two younger people because it's not the older person’s responsibility to sort it out, it’s the teachers. If you tell that older person they will stick and side with that person they know. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

Several students expressed their concerns about disclosing incidents of bullying to their parents. Developmentally, they felt obliged to show self-reliance and not go running to their parents for help. In addition to this, students’ apprehension stemmed from feelings of shame and they referred to not wanting their parents to feel worried or anxious on their behalf. Students were also worried about how their parents would respond to the news that their child was being bullied. Depending on parental temperament students stated that their parents’ might respond in the following unhelpful ways:

- Take matters into their own hands by confronting the person carrying out the bullying.
- Tell their child to try to ignore and avoid the person carrying out the bullying.
- Tell their child to fight back and stand up to the person carrying out the bullying.

These responses were seen as unconstructive and potentially harmful which meant students were likely to avoid seeking adult intervention. The following student stated that her mother would overreact by taking matters into her own hands. Going into school and aggressively confronting the person carrying out the bullying would definitely make things worse for this particular student as it would cause her embarrassment.

If I told my Mum, well I wouldn't tell her because she would say something like... ‘I'll kill em!’ She’d be embarrassing I wouldn’t want her coming into school. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).
Another student talked about her mother dismissing her feelings and viewing bullying as something that happens and is part of growing up. By advising that her child ignore unkind comments or stating that she should be able to deal with it, is likely to have made this student feel as though her mother was almost consenting to the bullying behaviour.

I put a picture on Facebook of my new haircut and someone called me a name because of it. If I told my Mum she just said ‘oh just look at them and smile’ and I’m like ‘but Mum but you don’t understand how I’m feeling cos this is hurtin me’ but my Mum would say ‘but that’s just ridiculous’. Cos like ....I don’t think that parents can always understand nowadays like.... Also we are getting older now and don’t really want to confide in them or our mum’s might say ‘you’re 12 now so you can deal with it’ but you might be like ‘Mum I just want your help’. (Joanna: Y7, FG2).

The quote from the next student shows how her mother would most likely use the time-honoured assumption that if her child displayed bravery and fought back the person carrying out the bullying would eventually stop. However, those students that bully usually have a sophisticated ability to bully those who are the least likely to fight back.

When a teacher tells you to inform your parents, well like Joanna says some don’t understand how kids are feeling and what they are actually going through. Parents just say ‘well if they hit you hit them back’ but you’re afraid to or you don’t want to or they say ‘if someone swears at you swear back at them’ and you don’t want to, you just want them to help you sort it out. (Holly: Y7, FG2).

Lastly, another student made reference to some students being bullied because of something that they did which their parents would not have condoned. Telling their parents that they were being ridiculed or bullied because of this would mean having to explain their involvement which would not be an easy thing to do.

You might feel embarrassed to tell your parents. You might of done something stupid but it got out of hand. If you feel embarrassed to tell your parents it’s best to let the teachers help you. (Lydia: Y7, FG2).
This particularly relates to cyberbullying as sexting can be sexually explicit or hurtful and these are the very situations that young people feel they cannot share with parents. No doubt students would be reluctant for parents to see the content of sexting messages/images as revealing this could be humiliating.

5.9 Summary of the qualitative findings

Students thoughtfully considered the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of incidents of all forms of bullying to staff. However, students also criticised current practices in place and expressed their concerns about the inconsistencies and infrequency of anti-bullying work.

Unfortunately, students were of the opinion that anti-bullying work in school was not as effective as it ought to be because it usually only occurred during Anti-Bullying Week. Students favoured a seamless approach aimed at addressing bullying. To avoid complacency anti-bullying work needed to remain high profile throughout the year so that it became embedded within the ethos of the school. According to students, current anti-bullying initiatives available in school were minimal and this was the reason why students failed to connect with or appreciate any existing anti-bullying work. Students also voiced their concerns about the inconsistency with which staff dealt with bullying incidents. They felt that some members of staff turned a ‘blind eye’ and were passive in their responses to reports of bullying.

In relation to school policies and approaches aimed at addressing bullying, government guidance suggests encouraging the participation of young people. Students reflected upon the positive influence involving students in school anti-bullying initiatives would have. Encouraging students to design posters and PowerPoint presentations or participate in making films or plays about bullying within the curriculum would help open communication between students and staff about bullying. Students were adamant that an open dialogue in which students engaged in discussion about bullying with staff would have more impact than relying on literature alone such as leaflets and posters. They also indicated that if students were alert to the fact that bullying was widespread and that others had successfully received support from staff which had helped resolve the incidents of bullying they may feel more confident in coming forward to report it.
Certain aspects that could facilitate the act of reporting bullying to staff were identified. Students were adamant that there needed to be as many conduits as possible for reporting bullying. Alerting and reminding students of the reporting routes in place to support and protect them needed to occur on a regular basis throughout the school year. Having reporting routes that were visible, accessible and uncomplicated to use was seen as the key to their success. Reluctance to talk to staff about bullying was due to fear and perceived ineffectiveness of speaking out. Students wanted guarantees that staff would be available and responsive in providing support to students. Others were cynical about staff ability in dealing with bullying incidents. Reference was made to the time constraints placed on staff as well as a shortage of designated staff available to support students which ultimately led to complaints being dismissed or plans to stop the bullying from reoccurring were not followed through.

Students were adamant that any information disclosed to staff needed to be done discreetly or privately away from the prying eyes of their peers. It was evident that students struggled to move away from internal pressures of ‘fitting in’ and trying to conform to behaviours and attitudes based on ‘not telling teachers’. A major source of conflict for students was being able to manage tensions between deciding whether to seek support from staff or remain silenced because of the fear of being labelled a ‘grass’ and being unprotected from further bullying.

Students also highlighted the level of support they expected to receive from staff once a bullying incident had been disclosed. Notably, they stressed the need to be heard and validated. Working closely with staff to find a mutually acceptable way forward in reaching a solution was vital in helping them feel some sense of control in the whole process. This would help them avoid feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness. Accessing follow-up support and being kept informed about the outcomes was also important to students. Strong views were expressed about staff implementing discipline approaches as a deterrent against bullying and students held the view that a clear series of consequences for this type of behaviour needed to be implemented throughout the whole school. Students also called for access to designated and committed members of staff responsible for supporting students. PSOs, the school’s police constable and trained staff were deemed worthy of this role as students believed that they possessed the skills to intervene in an effective and helpful manner.

Seeking support from their peers and family members were alternatives to relying on staff for support. It was suggested that students who were being bullied could attend a regular anti-bullying peer support group. This would be in the form of a drop-in lunchtime/after school club where students would have the opportunity to speak to school council members or other students that may have experienced bullying. The idea of talking to other students and sharing
their experiences was viewed as less formal and stigmatising. This open-door and relaxed approach to talking about bullying would help engender a sense of commonality and belonging to those students that felt isolated and alone. It is important to note that students recognised that peer support would only be appropriate for those students who were experiencing low-level bullying incidents. More serious bullying incidents would require adult intervention.

In the second, Year 7 focus group, the topic of being offered support and protection from bullying by older relatives in school arose. Those students who had older family members in school reported feeling less vulnerable because of the possible protection family members could offer. However, other students raised their concerns about family members intervening and parents were particularly viewed as unhelpful.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Chapter outline

This chapter will attend to critical evaluation in relation to the study’s research questions and future proposals for e-safety work in schools will be outlined. A theoretical framework for a contextualised conceptualisation of cyberbullying is also proposed. The chapter will conclude by considering the wider implications of this research for EP practice followed by a discussion of the unforeseen limitations of the study and recommendations for future work.

6.2 Aims of the study

The decision to carry out the research on cyberbullying came about because of the following three reasons.

1. Cyberbullying had been identified as a concerning issue by teaching staff and children and young people from different secondary schools within the LA.
2. To provide preliminary data on the prevalence and extent of cyberbullying amongst young people attending one secondary school within the LA.
3. To obtain young people’s views and ideas about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of cyberbullying to staff.

The aim of phase 1 of this study was descriptive and focused on unearthing detailed quantitative information about the prevalence and extent of secondary school students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. Analyses of the data from phase 1 revealed that many students were reluctant to report their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to staff in school. This was concerning as it indicated that young people were not receiving the support they may need.

An important factor in addressing cyberbullying or any form of bullying is encouraging students to go and seek help by confiding in staff. Understandably, staff cannot address bullying and
provide students with support if they are not informed about it happening. The aim of phase 2 of this study was to expand on the findings derived from phase 1 as well as offer an original contribution to the research on cyberbullying. Students were given the opportunity to engage in focus group discussions, from which, qualitative information was collected regarding their views and ideas about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of cyberbullying to staff.

6.3 Analysis of the quantitative findings from Phase 1

A questionnaire was tailored specifically to provide answers to the study’s research questions. An analysis of the quantitative data obtained from students’ responses will now be discussed.

6.3.1 RQ 1: What are students’ experiences of using ICT?

In a remarkably short period of time, Internet and mobile technology have become a part of everyday life. Findings from this study confirm this, they revealed that all students had access to the Internet at home and owned a mobile phone. Notably, figures from the study revealed that student ownership of Smartphones outnumbered that of traditional mobile phone ownership. Smartphone users accounted for 77.6% of mobile phone users. This evidences a major shift in that young people, even those from more socially deprived areas in England can afford to access the Internet via their Smartphone rather than a shared computer at home. This indicates that the risk of experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents is not just limited to youngsters living in more affluent areas of England but actually appears to extend to those youngsters living in areas of social deprivation.

Despite the fact that mobile technologies have penetrated significantly into young people’s lives previous studies on cyberbullying appear not to have investigated young people’s ownership and use of mobile technologies such as Smartphones. The only other research detailing information on this are; Ofcom’s (2013) latest Communications Market Report which found that three in five of teenagers (62%) own a Smartphone and Mascheroni and Olafsson’s (2014) research which concluded that Smartphones are devices that most young people (51%) are likely to own and this applies across all age groups and gender. These figures are lower than this study’s findings which suggests that Smartphone ownership amongst young people is
rapidly increasing and certainly supports the idea that for young people, “connecting to the internet is now personalised, private and mobile” (Katz, 2012, p. 13).

This study set out to determine the extent to which students communicate with one another using ICT. Despite difficulties in measuring the exact amount of time students engage in virtual communication the data revealed that all students regardless of Smartphone ownership were highly dependent on ICT for communicating and staying in touch with one another. Nearly a quarter of students (23.9%) spent more than 12 hours a week engaging in virtual communication with others, although, a higher percentage of students (38%) did so for approximately 9 – 12 hours per week. These findings are similar to that of Norton Online Family Report (2010), the results from the online survey found that children in England are spending an increasing amount of time communicating online (1.6 hours a day on average) this equates to approximately 11.2 hours per week which is similar to what most of the youngsters in this study indicated. A further study conducted in the United States by online gaming site Roiworld (2010) found that typically teenagers report spending two hours a day socialising online with others which is a slightly higher finding than this study and that of the Norton Online Family Report (2010).

The absence of parental restrictions on the amount of time students spent engaging in virtual communication with others was apparent, as just over half of the students (57.1%) reported that their parents did not insist on any time restrictions being imposed. The increasingly privatised conditions of Internet use that Smartphones offer are likely to inhibit or challenge parental mediation of youngsters’ online experiences. Stald et al. (2014) also share this assumption as they state that parents may decide not to set rules regarding Internet activities in situations where it is difficult to check whether or not the rules have been obeyed. In addition to this, parents may also decide that a Smartphone is too personal and private for them to feel comfortable about checking it.

Duerager and Livingstone (2010) reported on an analysis of parental mediation with regards to Internet use in the EU Kids Online Survey of 25,142 youngsters aged 9 – 16 years in 25 countries. The findings revealed that 89% of parents imposed rules about giving out personal information online but similar to this study’s findings, tracking the kinds of social activities their child engaged in was less common. It appears that parents are slower to address issues such as cyberbullying, as evidence from the report found that parents were more likely to give advice and monitor their children’s Internet use only after their child had already experienced something upsetting online. The researchers also found that even when youngsters admitted to having parental restrictions imposed on them, as would be expected, a third of youngsters stated that they ignored their parents’ requests.
6.3.2 RQ 2a: What is the prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber incidents experienced by students?

The true extent of cyberbullying is not known because of the fast moving pace of new technological developments quickly renders some research redundant. These factors have led to critical differences in the prevalence rates reported. Students participating in this study were specifically asked to indicate the actual types of unpleasant cyber behaviours or tactics that were employed as well as specify through which media these behaviours occurred. In contrast to other studies, this study also set out to make a useful distinction between those students who classed this as cyberbullying and those who did not.

From questionnaire data, it was revealed that in the last 6 months either via a mobile phone or any device allowing access to the Internet just over a quarter (26%) of students had experienced at least one of ten different forms of unpleasant cyber experiences listed. In terms of the types of unpleasant cyber incidents students experienced, receiving messages or images that contained unkind and hurtful comments were the most common (25%). Unkind comments and name calling was also the most frequent form of unpleasant cyber incident accounting for 80% of incidents in the study conducted by Price and Dalgleish (2010) and 27% of incidents in Mishna et al’s. (2010) study.

An interesting aspect of this study concerns students’ experiences of griefing and sexting which has received little attention in other studies on cyberbullying. The study found that griefing was the third most common (12.3%) form of unpleasant cyber incident that students experienced. This involves players in online gaming deliberately irritating and harassing other players within the game (Warner & Raiter, 2005). The only other study the researcher knows of that has investigated youngster’s experiences of griefing is a South Korean study by Tippett and Kwak (2012). Of the 416 youngsters surveyed, 46% reported being bullied while playing online games. The findings from both studies suggest that cyberbullying in online gaming may be a regular experience and an often encountered risk for youngsters. However, as Tippett and Kwak (2012) suggest it is important to bear in mind that the very nature of many online games may encourage aggressive behaviours, given the competitive environment of the game and the rivalries which exists between differing online social groups.

With regards to sexting which involves the sending and exchanging of sexually explicit or suggestive messages or images to others via a mobile phone or the Internet, 10.8% of students indicated that they had experienced this practice. A study for the South West Grid for Learning conducted by Phippen (2009) solely investigated sexting practices amongst 535 young people.
aged 13 to 18 years. Unlike the current study, questions in an online survey were deliberately targeted at friends of the participants rather than the individual, as it was felt they would be more open about friend's practices than their own. The survey clearly showed a population fully aware of the concept of sexting and a significant subset who were actively engaged with the practice. In terms of experiences of sexting, approximately 40% indicated that they knew friends who carried out such practices and 27% of respondents said that sexting happens regularly or all of the time. What was particularly worrying was young people's somewhat blasé attitude towards sexting. This was illustrated in the fact that almost 40% of respondents did not think that a photograph of someone topless as being inappropriate, and 15% thinking similar of naked pictures. Phippen (2009) concluded that young people appear to be unconcerned about intimacy or privacy and are ill equipped to understand the implications of their actions. Given there is evidence that both griefing and sexting are prevalent amongst young people and form part of a wider online relationship young people have with each other, it would make sense to cover these practices within wider e-safety education.

This study also set out to discover the popularity and usage of a wide range of media through which unpleasant cyber incidents may occur. Out of the 93 students that indicted that they had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident, a high percentage of students (82.8%) indicated that they had received unpleasant cyber incidents through Internet based instant messenger applications on their Smartphones such as Blackberry Messenger or i-Messgage. With this media, students are able to exchange messages with a single person or with groups of people simultaneously. Direct comparisons of the use of Smartphone messenger with previous research cannot be made as the researcher is not aware of any other studies that have reported findings about this particular medium. What is clear is that the use of text messaging to communicate is becoming passé for many Smartphone users worldwide. Since the study was conducted WhatsApp Messenger has become increasingly popular amongst young people. This app is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows users to exchange messages free of charge. In addition to basic messaging, WhatsApp users can create groups, send each other unlimited images, video and audio media messages.
With regards to Internet media, Social Networking Sites, specifically Facebook, was the most common medium through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred (60.2%). These results indicate that the majority of unpleasant cyber incidents occur through media that are specifically used for social networking. This is not surprising as it is natural for young people to want to stay connected to their peers for fear of missing out. Instant messaging and Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Facebook have provided convenient media through which to do this. Particularly Facebook, as it has a variety of functions that enables youngsters to stay connected with one another either in a positive or negative way. O’Dea and Campbell’s (2012) results showed that the primary use of Facebook was keeping in contact with friends (58.7%). Wall posts were the most popular function (29.9%) followed by chat (19.6%), status updates (13.5%), and photo viewing (12.8%)

6.3.3 RQ 2b: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?

Previous research has identified several factors such as age, gender and academic ability likely contribute to being the target of non-cyber forms of bullying. However, as discussed earlier in Section 2.11, the majority of research on cyberbullying has limited the focus to factors such as age and gender with only three studies that the researcher is aware of including academic ability (Cross, Piggin et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw, et al., 2012; Huang & Chou, 2010). Despite numerous findings being published, there is still no clear evidence about which factors make young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents and/or cyberbullying. In an attempt to extend the research on cyberbullying, it was considered important to continue to investigate whether age and gender were factors influencing students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. However, some additional and more original factors were also included such as, ownership of a Smartphone, parental restrictions, academic ability and the number of hours per week spent engaging in social networking with others.

When investigating which factors are likely to make some young people more susceptible to cyberbullying, previous research has usually applied chi-square analyses to examine associations between variables of interest (Ackers, 2012; Genta et al., 2012; Mishna et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008; Tippet & Kwak, 2012). This statistical test has its limitations in that it can only analyse two categorical variables at a time and it cannot determine which of the cell frequencies are observed more or less often than expected by chance. As a result only a general pattern of relations is identified. To overcome this limitation the study used logistic regression, so that the effects of all six independent variables could be evaluated simultaneously. Out of the six possible predictive factors explored two were statistically
significant. These were Year group and time spent each week engaging in virtual communication with others.

Statistical analysis revealed that students in Year 7 (11 to 12 year olds) as opposed to students in Year 10 (14 to 15 year olds) were significantly more likely to experience unpleasant cyber incidents. Research in this area could lend important insights into the Year group in which cyberbullying most frequently surfaces and could prove useful in providing suggestions of where resources aimed at cyberbullying prevention in schools should be targeted to achieve the most effective responses. However, findings from previous research have been mixed and are not similar to that of this study. Some studies have demonstrated an association with older students usually experiencing more cyberbullying behaviours than younger students (Cross, Shaw et al., 2012; Mishna et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2008). Tokunaga (2010) reported a curvilinear relationship between cyberbullying and age with a peak around mid-adolescence. Others have demonstrated a lack of association altogether (Ackers, 2012; Rivers and Noret, 2010 Tippett & Kwak, 2012).

Possible reasons why the findings of this study differ to those from previous research will now be discussed. Firstly, the unusual findings may coincide with the major changes in mobile technologies which have led to the rapid spread of ownership of Smartphones and other mobile technology devices among younger children. The outcome of which has meant that younger children now have the opportunity to access the Internet to communicate with others for longer periods of time without parental supervision. Ultimately, this puts younger students at more potential risk of experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents than several years ago. Another possible reason for younger students experiencing more unpleasant cyber incidents is that fact that students in Year 7 have recently undergone the transition from primary to secondary school. Transitions can be problematic, for some students, settling into a new school and establishing and maintaining new friendship groups is a challenging process which is often fraught with interpersonal conflict which is likely to overspill into the virtual realm of their lives. This changing world of younger students needs to be anticipated. Schools would do well to recognise this finding and ensure support and guidance is given to students during this transition period.

Time spent communicating with others via the Internet or a mobile phone was the strongest predictive factor in students experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents. Students were significantly more likely to experience an unpleasant cyber incident if they engaged in socialising frequently each week (9 – 12 hours) and very frequently each week (more than 12 hours). The upsurge in young people spending time engaged in online networking, driven by the increase in Smartphones appears to be putting them at a greater risk of encountering
unpleasant cyber incidents. Previous studies on cyberbullying have confirmed a link between cyberbullying and time spent online. For example, Walrave and Heirman (2011) found a positive direct link between Internet use and involvement in cyberbullying, young people involved in cyberbullying either as targets or agents were generally heavy Internet users. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) found that time spent online and computer proficiency were significant positive predictors of experiencing cyberbullying among participants below 18 years of age. However, these researchers did not clearly define what ‘going online’ referred to as this could encompass a range of online activities such as information searching, downloading music, playing games as well as social networking. Such research suggests that Internet use that involves simply browsing is related to an increased risk of cyberbullying. Unlike these two studies, this study focused specifically on social networking which was found to be significantly associated with a higher risk of experiencing an unpleasant cyber incident. Despite the risky nature of networking using social media, some young people would sooner dismiss or tolerate unpleasant cyber incidents rather than separate from their Smartphones and detach themselves from the thrill of social networking in cyberspace. It seems that SNSs have evolved into growing necessities and are very much integrated into young people’s daily lives. Their popularity seems to be on the increase with new sites (not included in the present study) emerging such as Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat and WhatsApp. However, an alternative argument is that young people with limited access to the Internet and less experience of usage may in fact be more vulnerable in terms of online safety (Cross et al., 2009). This argument suggests that excessive parental control such as installing monitoring software, checking message histories and imposing time restrictions on social networking might be counterproductive and may limit development of understanding about using technologies responsibly. Based on a variety of research findings it seems that parental efforts to encourage cybersafety need to find a balance between monitoring behaviour and allowing young people to independently and age appropriately negotiate their own boundaries in cyberspace.

6.3.4 RQ 3: Do those students who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?

One of the key attractions to cyberbullying is reported to be the perceived anonymity that the Internet and other communication technologies can provide. Estimates vary as to which proportion of those being targeted know the identity of the person carrying out the cyberbullying, ranging anywhere between 43% and 80% (Cassidy et al., 2011; Kowalski et al., 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Smith & Slonje, 2010). This anonymity allows for loss of self-control and the absence of restraints in social behaviour typical of direct interaction which Suler (2004) refers to as dissociative anonymity. Brown et al. (2006) claim that youth may hide behind false identities
to engage in online activities they may not normally assume in face-to-face encounters. In their study 52% of young people revealed they often pretend to be older when online, 33% take on different personalities, 15% admitted to acting contrary to what they would do in the real world by being hurtful and 15% admitted to taking on someone else’s identity and assuming their identity online. This anonymity also appears to increase the level of experienced fear in those being targeted, since potentially anyone could be the bully, including friends or other trusted people (Mishna et al., 2010). However, findings from this study found that engaging in cyberbullying behaviours using ICT is not necessarily always carried out anonymously. Indeed in many cases the person instigating unpleasant cyber communications was known to the individual being targeted (64.5%). Other research estimates regarding anonymity vary and range between 43% and 80% (Cassidy et al., 2011; Kowalski et al., 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Smith & Sionje, 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009).

The assumption of anonymity is further challenged as cyberbullying often occurs in the presence of bystanders or accessories. In the context of cyberspace, the characteristics of ICT are partly responsible for making young people particularly susceptible to taking part in bystander behaviour that supports cyberbullying. For example, by forwarding or posting a message/image intended to humiliate another young person, bystanders are complicit in spreading it to ever-widening audiences (Kowalski et al., 2008). Being an inactive bystander by choosing to delete nasty materials instead of posting or forwarding them on seems to be an important part of the solution to the problem of cyberbullying, as this prevents the audience for cyberbullying from being enlarged. This kind of reaction over the Internet towards someone being bullied entails some degree of moral engagement in not being part of the problem (Spears, Slee, Owens & Johnson, 2009). With this in mind, it is important not to focus interventions exclusively on the target and agent, but rather to consider the peer group dynamics that function to fuel bullying (Greene, 2003).

Results from this study also found that all those students who indicated that they knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them were also targeted by the same person in real life. This finding confirms what other researchers have reported in that there is considerable overlap between cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying (Cross, Piggin, et al., 2012; Cross, Shaw, et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008; Rivers & Noret, 2010). This supports the idea that cyberbullying predominately occurs within pre-existing social relationships and usually emerges most commonly from relationship problems such as break-ups, envy, intolerance and ganging up (Mesch, 2009). This overlap would suggest that the hypothesis posited by Li (2007) of cyberbullying being old wine in new bottles can be partly confirmed. However, while the aspect of anonymity is not always a distinguishing factor in some instances of cyberbullying, we should not ignore the fact that 35.5% of those individuals in this study did not know the person targeting
them in cyberspace. What is important to note is that ongoing bullying in both environments is likely to have the most damaging long-term effects (Spears, Taddeo, Daly, Stretton & Karklins, 2015). Hence e-safety work in schools should also focus on the quality of peer relationships in both online and real life environments.

6.3.5 RQ 4a: How many students self identify as having been cyberbullied?

When students in this study were asked to state explicitly whether they thought they had been cyberbullied just over half of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident (50.5%) perceived their experiences to have been cyberbullying. As far as the researcher is aware, the distinction between any experience of ‘cybernastiness’ and cyberbullying has only been pointed out by one other researcher. Katz (2012) found that 49% of 9,290 respondents to an online survey had experienced ‘cybernastiness’. In contrast, a much lower percentage (19%) considered their experience to be cyberbullying. Tokunaga (2010) carried out a meta-analysis on cyberbullying research and concluded that worldwide, between 20% and 40% of young people experience cyberbullying. These percentages are much higher than this study and Katz’s (2012) study. A possible reason for this is the fact that the research reviewed did not specifically question participants about the different forms of unpleasant cyber incidents they experienced and whether they perceived these experiences as actual cyberbullying. Thus, previous research findings reported may be inconsistent which means rates of cyberbullying reported in previous research could be over inflated and therefore misleading.

6.3.6 RQ 4b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

There are multiple factors that may influence why some students identify themselves as having been cyberbullied. In an attempt to extend the research on cyberbullying, it was considered important to examine the differential role of age, gender, students’ academic ability, frequency with which unpleasant cyber incidents were encountered and the emotional response experienced. All five independent variables were evaluated simultaneously using logistic regression.
With particular reference to students’ emotional response to cyberbullying, research on the impact of cyberbullying is beginning to provide a picture of its possible repercussions. With regards to determining the effects of cyberbullying, most studies have measured the emotional correlates, for example the subjective perception of the impact of cyberbullying and its association with specific emotions. Young people who are cyberbullied report feeling sad, anxious, annoyed, embarrassed, stressed and lonely (Hay, Meldrum & Mann, 2010; Price & Dalgleish, 2010). However, the mere feelings of those youngsters who have been targeted do not tell us the possible effects linked with these emotions. What seems to have been neglected in previous studies on cyberbullying is exploring whether factors such as the negative emotions associated with unpleasant cyber incidents impact on students’ perceptions of the severity of the incidents or vice versa. The intention of this study was to investigate the impact of negative emotions. Statistical analyses of the results revealed that students’ negative emotional response was the most significant predictor for students self-identifying as having been cyberbullied. Those students who indicated that they felt a little or very upset were significantly more likely to perceive the unpleasant cyber incident as severe enough to warrant being viewed as cyberbullying. It is important to bear in mind that the emotional responses triggered by the experience of unpleasant cyber incidents are extremely subjective which makes the concept of intent within cyberbullying unclear and difficult to identify particularly due to the indirect nature of this form of communication. Whether the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incident has done so intentionally and deliberately is irrelevant. What appears to be most relevant is the recipient’s interpretation of the message/image and the emotional distress caused. It is this which is the defining factor as to whether an unpleasant cyber incident is deemed as cyberbullying.

The second significant predictive factor was the frequency with which unpleasant cyber incidents were experienced. This finding suggests that the aspect of repetition, used in definitions of non-cyber forms of bullying may be applicable for cyberbullying. However, the questionnaire used in the study did not ascertain whether students’ subjective interpretation of frequency/repetition of unpleasant cyber incidents related to (a) separate unpleasant cyber incidents repeated overtime or to (b) one or two single acts which felt like repeated incidents because they were continuously forwarded on by bystanders. When taking this into account the aspect of widespread publicity may also be important, as the more people who witness the unpleasant cyber content the more the content will spread which inevitably increases the potential for further harm and ridicule (Smith & Slonje, 2010).
6.3.7 RQ5: When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do students go to confide in and seek help?

In spite of the reportedly high efficacy of informing adults about being cyberbullied as well as it being the advice young people claim they would give others (Price & Dalgleish 2010). The results from the study revealed that out of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident, 35.5% of students told their parents if they had encountered an unpleasant cyber incident and even fewer (21.5%) would tell staff at school. Other studies have yielded even lower results with regards to youngsters’ reluctance to report cyberbullying to adults. The findings from the first study conducted by Smith et al. (2008) showed that 26.8% would inform parents and only 15.5% a teacher, whereas in Mishna et al’s. (2010) study only 8% would disclose this information to a parent and 3% would inform a teacher. Bauman (2010) found that only 9% would report cyberbullying to parents and 12% would tell an adult in school. These results confirm that young people are reluctant to seek help and this has implications in that if parents and school staff are not informed about cyberbullying they are unable to offer students support and cyberbullying will go unchallenged. Therefore, students being targeted may experience what Brown et al. (2006) has termed a prolonged sense of victimisation which could lead to students exhibiting worrying behaviours that staff will not know the cause of.

Those students who reported that they would not tell a member of staff in school were asked to indicate why. The most common reason for not telling staff was because students feared being labelled by their peers as someone who told tales (54.8%) and 52.7% indicated that they thought telling staff would prove ineffective because staff would or could not do anything about it. A further 33.3% claimed that they thought staff were too busy to provide support. Other studies have also found that young people attribute the inhibition of reporting cyberbullying to staff in school because of fears of humiliation, not being believed, having concerns trivialised and believing that teachers do not know enough about technology to understand the problem (Bauman, 2010; Cassidy et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). These findings are particularly important, as it implies that students do not see adults in school as able to assist in such matters. It therefore seems central to bolster students’ awareness of cyberbullying and encourage students to report it. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.4.

A further key finding from this study was that the majority of students indicated that they would prefer to tell a friend (64.5%) about any experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. The use of peer support is often overlooked, friends are a useful resource, and they have a strong influence on students’ emotional, behavioural and affective development and can also help
reduce anxiety and offer protection and coping advice (Bukowski, 2001). Perhaps a way forward is to educate students in schools about their responsibilities and how best to support one another. The idea of peer support is discussed in more detail later in Section 6.4.1.7.

6.4 Analysis of the qualitative findings from Phase 2

During the second phase of the study the use of NGT focus groups were conducted. These discussions provided an opportunity to uncover relevant and insightful information into students’ views and ideas related to making the reporting of cyberbullying to staff in school easier for students.

6.4.1 RQ 6: What are students’ ideas and views about the actions that need to be mobilised in schools to support the reporting of cyberbullying to staff?

Even though students were asked specifically to give their views and ideas about the actions and strategies that would support the reporting of cyberbullying to staff, it is important to point out that students did not always differentiate between cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying. Students provided their views and ideas about what needed to happen in school to support the reporting of both cyber and non-cyber forms of bullying to staff.

6.4.1.1 Organising theme: Promoting anti-bullying initiatives.

Students indicated that it is insufficient for staff to simply inform them that bullying will not be tolerated and they were unanimous in that more effective measures were needed in alerting students to the pathways in place to protect and support them from all forms of bullying. A great level of interest was expressed in all students being afforded meaningful opportunities to participate in the development of school-wide anti-bullying initiatives. It was suggested that staff should not limit students’ participation to engaging in dialogue about bullying to Anti-Bullying Week or with those sitting on student councils and committees.
Students spoke about existing school anti-bullying initiatives being led by staff in school which meant they were too broad and not relevant to their lives or the school context. Involving them in all aspects of the school’s anti-bullying initiatives would ensure greater impact and would exert more influence on their behaviours towards each other. A range of suggestions were made, which included the following:

- Display anti-bullying posters around the school building and in every classroom which are designed by a range of students within the school.
- Conduct student led assemblies dedicated to outlining the school’s anti-bullying stance.
- Present films or plays made by students about real-life bullying incidents that have occurred but have now been resolved.
- Hand out leaflets and flyers designed by students at break times which contain information about how support can be accessed.
- View information about the school’s anti-bullying initiatives in the form of PowerPoint presentations which have been created by students.
- Staff to formulate anti-bullying policies in collaboration with students.

The active involvement of students at the centre of the design, delivery and evaluation of a school’s anti-bullying policy and initiatives are important and effective components of anti-bullying strategies (Salmivalli, 1999; Sharp, 1996). Ensuring the involvement of students in this process is compatible with children and young people’s rights to participate and have their views respected under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). However, despite these recommendations, while well intentioned, in the researcher’s professional experience as an EP, it is usually the staff in school who are solely responsible for developing anti-bullying policies and initiatives.

There was agreement amongst students that they would like to be engaged in formulating the school’s anti-bullying initiatives and policies with staff. With reference to their own experiences, a number of students suggested that, at present, they did not have enough, if any, input into their school’s anti-bullying initiatives and none of the students interviewed had seen or been directed to read the schools’ anti-bullying policy. This finding is not uncommon; in the research conducted by Side and Johnson (2014), only one of the students that participated in the semi-structured interviews had actually seen the anti-bullying policy of the school which he/she attended. None of the students had been involved in helping to write the anti-bullying policies and students were of the opinion that the anti-bullying policies did not accurately reflect the needs and views of students for whom the policies were intended. According the Side and Johnson (2014), the meaning created by the anti-bullying policies was that adults in school held the information about bullying both how it could be prevented and managed and staff were in a
position of power and authority of telling students what to do rather than working with them to understand the support they needed. The researchers were of the opinion that the lack of knowledge of, or involvement in the development of school anti-bullying policies meant that students were unable to identify their rights in relation to bullying or to understand the possible supports available to them.

Students in this study also recommended that dedicated time be provided throughout the academic year for students to be engaged in discussions about school-wide anti-bullying initiatives. There was an emphasis on the importance of presenting this information not only in language and formats that are appropriate to students’ ages and abilities, but in ways that are interesting and engaging so that students will pay attention to the messages and information being communicated to them. Suggested forums for this were during lessons such as drama in which bullying scenarios in the form of plays or films could be rehearsed and then shown in assemblies. Students believed that regular, open and safe communication about the topic of bullying would be more effective than relying on posters and leaflets alone. This open dialogue would enable students to feel more informed and have a sense of ownership over the different approaches and actions available to them. Students were also keen for staff to develop and carry out more direct work with them in order to enhance their participation in formulating and implementing anti-bullying initiatives. This could be achieved through regularly scheduling and planning lessons on the topic of bullying. Students identified areas across the curriculum that could lend themselves to the infusion of lessons about bullying prevention which included:

- Engaging in role-play and making plays or films about bullying in Drama.
- Watching short films on bullying in Citizenship and discussing its effects and the different ways students could seek help from staff.
- Designing posters in Art.
- Creating PowerPoint presentations and familiarising themselves with the anti-bullying page and different reporting routes on the school website in ICT lessons.

Thompson and Smith (2011) would appear to support this finding. They claim that schools with the most successful approaches to bullying take full account of students’ views and dedicate curriculum and tutorial time to discussing relationships and matters like bullying. Notably, curriculum work was most effective when delivered through creative, interactive lessons but skilled staff are essential to effective delivery.
Students were in agreement that staff consulting with them on the development of anti-bullying initiatives should be an ongoing commitment not a one-off exercise and should never be considered as complete. Employing innovative ways to maintain student and staff interest in addressing bullying was viewed as the key to keeping the anti-bullying momentum alive. Students spoke about regularly recreating and redesigning the anti-bullying literature as well as updating the information on the anti-bullying page on the school website. With regards to this, students specifically spoke about amending the information and contact details of those members of staff who students should report bullying to. It was inevitable that staff would leave and/or change roles. In terms of cyberbullying, technological innovations are constantly evolving and with it are the strategies young people are using to carry out cyberbullying. Therefore, it is vital that staff understanding of the issue of cyberbullying is continually updated and informed by the views and perspectives of students themselves.

The value placed upon anti-bullying initiatives would ultimately depend on staff implementing measures to uphold these commitments in practice. Students stressed the importance of staff monitoring, reviewing and publicising the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives on a regular basis. Guidance from the former DCSF (2007a) seems to concur with students’ views as it also highlights the importance of reviewing the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies or initiatives especially relating to cyberbullying due to its evolving nature. However, students realised that solely celebrating the success of anti-bullying work through recording systems seen only by staff or via accreditation schemes or awards would have little meaning to students. In discussing preferred approaches, it was notable that students consistently emphasised the importance and value of hearing or reading about real life stories in which bullying incidents had occurred, been reported and successfully resolved. This information would be disseminated through assemblies, newsletters and posters which all students could access. Students felt that celebrating success stories in this manner would help establish a culture in which informing staff about bullying was encouraged and seen as a positive thing to do and more importantly it would be viewed by students as worthwhile. However, in order for this to happen, the full commitment of staff needs to be secured. Establishing and sustaining a leadership group committed to maintaining bullying prevention efforts in light of changing priorities and mandates should also be considered.

6.4.1.2 Organising theme: Facilitating the reporting of bullying.

Students identified a variety of ways to help facilitate the act of reporting bullying. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of visibly publicising a diverse range of resources and channels of help, along with clear procedures to follow so that most students could quickly and confidently access support as and when needed. It was evident that one of a number of reasons students
were hesitant about disclosing information about bullying to staff was because there was uncertainty about, how to approach members of staff to report bullying incidents. Clear reporting routes did not appear to exist. Students also had doubts about the effectiveness of staff intervention. The idea of clear signposting meant that reporting routes would be visibly publicised using a variety of methods such as posters, leaflets, the school website, school booklets and school assemblies. The information provided would also be clear in that it would consist of specific details such as;

- names and photographs of specific members of staff responsible for supporting students in each Year group;
- the variety of methods available to contact staff to report bullying; and
- the specific days and times staff are available to provide support.

Remedying inaccessible and ill-defined reporting routes by making them widely accessible and informative was important to students. This referred to reporting routes being: (a) diverse in the type of approach used, (b) visible and easily located in school and (c) accessible both at school and home via electronic communications.

As already discussed students were of the opinion that reporting bullying incidents to staff was laden with risks. One potential risk that students wanted to avoid was being found out by their peers as someone who had disclosed information about bullying. One way to overcome this was to use indirect modes of communicating during initial contact with staff such as text messaging, email and instant chat. This indirect method of communication was viewed as less onerous on the student as well as straightforward and uncomplicated to use. Other indirect approaches mentioned were the use of written messages posted in an anti-bullying box. Students stated that writing a short message was quick and effortless which ensured ease of use. Having access to reporting routes which were straightforward and risk-free was considered a powerful motivator in encouraging students to make use of them.

Students expressed a wish to be able to report bullying incidents to alternative sources outside of school. They suggested that there should be an option to contact outside agencies/professionals specialised in providing advice and support on bullying issues. This would be achieved through using Internet hyperlinks which students proposed should be made available on the school website. Students also indicated that engaging in virtual dialogue with other youngsters who were or had experienced bullying could also be beneficial. However, the success of such sites is questionable. Spears et al. (2015) found that young people are unlikely to access online help, regardless of the way online help was delivered or packaged. Specifically, 60% of young people indicated they would be unlikely to seek help from self-help
applications, 58% would not contact non-professionals online for help and 51% would not use phone help lines. Luxton, June and Fairall (2012) claimed that the lack of success of online support services/resources may be due to the fact that they have been designed by adults and premised upon a sound evidence base, but possibly without credible authentic input from young people.

**6.4.1.3 Organising theme: Responsiveness of staff.**

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that all forms of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively and that students who are bullied are supported and kept safe. However, staff can only do this if they are made aware that bullying incidents are occurring. Students in all three focus groups voiced concerns about approaching staff for help. They held steadfast opinions about staff not having the capacity and time to investigate reports of bullying nor provide the support students may require. In considering whether to approach staff to report bullying, students wanted assurance that staff would be quick to respond. In the researcher’s professional experience as an EP, she is only too aware of the busy schedules of staff and how this might impact on their capacity to provide students with the kind of support they desire. With this in mind, it would be useful as a school community to think about how to manage responses to reports of bullying. The use of peer support is one solution which is discussed in more detail in Section 6.4.1.7.

There was an expectation that there should be sufficient numbers of designated and committed members of staff in each Year group who would be available to provide support. Students were adamant that sufficient numbers of staff should be made available so that the different reporting routes suggested by students such as the school anti-bullying helpline, the online appointment system, instant chat facility as well as appointment slots during break times were fully functional and worth using. Having ample staff available who have dedicated time set aside to support students who are experiencing bullying should, according to students, help make immediate actions by staff all the more possible. Initiating swift and consistent responses to reports of bullying was deemed as critical as it conveys a clear message that bullying is not acceptable and it would hopefully help those students being bullied feel less powerless about their predicament. Students specified that the messages posted in anti-bullying boxes, written emails as well as messages left on the anti-bullying helpline answering machine should be read or listened to on a daily basis. Following on from this, staff would need to promptly contact the student requesting support providing several options in terms of different times and places to meet that same week to discuss the situation.
Students referred to the advantages of immediate action taken by staff in responding to reports of bullying. They associated timely responses with bullying being dealt with and resolved in an effective manner. Over time, observing the prompt and consistent actions of staff would have the potential to influence students’ thinking in that all reports of bullying to staff are taken seriously and investigated vigorously. Maintaining this level of commitment in responding to reports of bullying would help reassure students that disclosing information about bullying to staff was worthwhile and this could help build up students’ confidence to make use of the different reporting routes available to them.

6.4.1.4 Organising theme: Removing barriers to reporting.

Facilitating student access to reporting routes in which reports of bullying could be disclosed anonymously emerged as an important issue. Students gave the impression that they thought telling was the right thing to do however they were quite clear that they were likely to remain ‘tight-lipped’ if there was a chance that their identities could be revealed. Considerable thought was given to which methods would be best suited to preserving and protecting student anonymity. Indirect methods such as email, text message and instant chat were the preferred methods of reporting bullying to staff. Should students decide to communicate directly with staff, then they would want access to somewhere in which disclosure could take place away from the prying eyes of other students. This would be a challenge practically, as many secondary schools are limited in terms of rooms available within school to have private conversations. In addition to this, students also insisted that staff responsible for supporting students who reported bullying incidents should exercise caution by not approaching students directly and publicly during the school day. In short, the message communicated time and again by students was that a key enabler as regards reporting bullying is that students can do so anonymously or privately. Other research has also highlighted the importance in preserving anonymity, Cassidy et al. (2009), found that almost three quarters of participants agreed they would report cyberbullying only if they could do so anonymously. Similarly, participants in the Ombudsman for Children (2009) study felt that creating routes for students to report concerns in private and confidence is a necessary measure to mitigate students’ fears about the negative repercussions that speaking up may have for them.

For most students, the first and most important phase of support needed was to be offered a chance to unburden themselves. Being listened to and having their feelings acknowledged would allow students some control over the timing of relinquishing anonymity and perhaps time to consider possible solutions. They also needed time to prepare for the potential backlash. Students believed that if their peers found out that they were implicated in disclosing information
about bullying to a member of staff at school, then future and harsher incidents of bullying were almost certain to ensue. Only two students considered relinquishing their identity. The students stipulated that staff must ensure that the student is fully informed and is in agreement for this to happen. They also emphasised the importance of staff being able to assure their safety and offer them protection especially during unstructured times when students felt more vulnerable.

6.4.1.5 Organising theme: Expected level of support.

Students thought it important that there were options as regards who they can talk to about bullying. A number of students suggested that the key issue is not who children and young people should go to, but rather that they can identify at least one member of staff who they “trust” and consider “approachable”. Words and phrases used to characterise a member of staff who they felt comfortable to approach and talk to about bullying were:

- reassures you;
- understands;
- makes you feel comfortable;
- friendly;
- trustworthy;
- kind;
- caring; and
- listens.

Established trusting teacher-student relationships were the key to students’ willingness to share information about bullying with staff. Thus, developing and establishing supportive and mutually respectful relationships from the outset is crucial. It takes time to build rapport and earn respect therefore, it is essential that this is in place before any bullying issues arise so that, if students find themselves in difficulty, they will be more likely to feel comfortable and confident about approaching a member of staff. According to Katz (2012), striking the right tone is a challenge when talking to teenagers about what is essentially their social world, as this is often shut off from adults. She believes knowledgeable and friendly is the tone adults should seek when engaging with young people.

Students shared similar viewpoints in that members of staff with designated responsibility for supporting students who report bullying should not minimise or trivialise any report. Making statements such as ‘oh ignore it and they’ll eventually stop’ was deemed unhelpful. Students
believed that statements like this gave them the impression that staff had dismissive attitudes towards bullying and discounted their feelings which meant that they were inclined to think that staff could not be relied upon for support. One student suggested that credulous and attentive listening would be evident if staff made written notes during meetings, this would also prevent students from having to keep repeating things in subsequent meetings.

Staff listening in a non-judgemental way, and being sensitive to their needs and fears, was important. Particular reference was made to staff needing to refrain from being biased in their responses by making statements such as ‘what did you do to hurt them?’ Failure to believe their reports and voicing disapproval of students who complained as fussing about nothing would ultimately mean failure of staff to thoroughly investigate reported incidents of bullying. Staff adopting a “one size fits all” model for intervening in school bullying was something that students did not endorse. They expected staff to take into account the different requirements of each student so that any support given was personalised and adapted to their specific needs. In order to guide and facilitate students in developing their own resolution, the importance of staff utilising a problem-solving stance rather than a bossy stance was emphasised. Having some agency and control over any measures taken to deal with the bullying was deemed as important.

Fears about experiencing retaliation from the aggressor or their peers for breaking the code of silence was always at the forefront of students’ minds. Once an incident of bullying had been reported and supposedly dealt with, it was important for staff to continue to monitor and review the interactions and relationships between those students involved. For instance, it was suggested that staff should be seen patrolling and checking that bullying was not occurring in areas of the school building that had been identified as hot-spots. In addition to this, students insisted that staff should make a concerted effort to meet up with those involved to ensure that agreements had been sustained and the bullying had ceased.

Students gave the impression that they advocated zero tolerance approaches towards bullying. Reprimands, confiscation of electronic communication devices, informing parents, detention, suspension or expulsion of those individuals responsible for bullying were mentioned. They seemed to think that employing and publicising consequences/sanctions would send out a clear message that; bullying is unacceptable, it would deter others as well as those that have engaged in bullying behaviours from repeating the behaviour and it would demonstrate publicly that school rules and policies about bullying are taken seriously. In fact, in England, the Department for Education (DfE) recommends that bullying should always incur some form of sanction: “Schools should apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show
clearly that their behaviour is wrong” (DfE, 2011, p.3). According to a national survey of 1378 schools in England, direct sanctions are the most commonly used strategy in responding to cases of bullying, with 92% of the schools reporting its use (Thompson & Smith, 2011). However, there appears to be little evidence on the effectiveness of direct sanctions.

Students were of the opinion that the individual responsible for carrying out bullying behaviours is the guilty party, who is solely to blame for the bullying situation. The targets of bullying were viewed as innocent victims having nothing to do with the way they are being treated. Thus, according to the students, the solution must be to blame and punish those responsible regardless of their personal situation or needs. This zero tolerance approach is at odds with the unbiased approach students expected staff to take with those who are the targets of bullying as referred to earlier. It seems as though students want staff to take the side of the individual who reports bullying and are not prepared to consider how they could have influenced the bullying behaviour. Perhaps an additional approach is to consider the agent of bullying in a more empathic context and empower those being targeted to think of ways to resolve interpersonal conflict.

6.4.1.6 Organising theme: Status of designated staff.

Even though all members of staff in school should be alert to the signs of bullying behaviour, students suggested that there should be agreement about which specific and designated members of staff are committed and have responsibility for the recording and overseeing of reported incidents of bullying. Students had different views about who they might be willing to approach to report bullying. Students made the following suggestions about who they thought would be best suited to the role, these were:

- PSOs;
- school’s police constable; and
- trained staff.

It was expected that the names and contact details of these specific members of staff should be clearly communicated and information about how to access support from them should be publicised using a range of approaches such as those listed earlier in Table 5.2.

From the content of the discussions, it was evident that despite PSOs having less status and influence than the teaching staff in school, they were still identified as having the attributes and
skills best suited to support students who report incidents of bullying. The majority of students commented upon the personal disposition of PSOs. They were portrayed as being relaxed and informal when interacting with students and they were described as being good listeners and proficient at solving a range of disputes students may be involved in with each other. The relaxed and friendly approach used by PSOs was valued by students which led them to identify PSOs as being the ideal members of staff in school who could intervene in an effective and helpful manner.

Students raised awareness of some of the more complicated sides of cyberbullying. They were considered in their thoughts and acknowledged the limited level of responsibility and authority staff may have to intervene with incidents of cyberbullying. Students were concerned that staff may not possess the power to deal with very serious incidents of cyberbullying, such as being able to confiscate students’ personal electronic devices or have the authority to trawl through written text messages to find evidence of cyberbullying. If this was the case, then staff effectiveness and impact in dealing with such incidents would be limited. To overcome this predicament, some students held the opinion that the school’s police constable was best placed to support students who had reported incidents of cyberbullying. Unlike staff in school, he would have the jurisdiction to intervene more effectively as he could monitor and trace cyber threats, confiscate electronic communication devices, offer support and protection outside of the school premises and impose lawful punishments on persistent offenders. Notably, one of the questions students were asked when completing the questionnaire during phase 1 of the study was, to whom students were most likely to report unpleasant cyber incidents to? The option of the school’s police officer was not provided, had it been, then different results may have been generated. Interestingly, the study carried out by Cassidy et al. (2009) found that reporting cyberbullying to the police was the least viable option chosen by young people. However, in the case of the school’s onsite police constable he is familiar to most of the students. This is an important factor to take into account when considering whether students should be encouraged to report cyberbullying to the police.

Students suggested that designated staff responsible for supporting students who reported incidents of bullying ought to have received adequate training preferably from professionals outside of school who specialise in preventative work around the issue of bullying. Having been trained it was expected that staff would possess the skills to provide students with a range of support which would address their individual needs. Ensuring consistency in the level of support students accessed from different members of staff was important as this would help make the process of seeking and obtaining support a more positive experience for students. Interestingly, data from the questionnaire revealed that 52.7% students believed telling staff about cyberbullying would be ineffective. The results indicated that students view staff as providing
limited help, which might be caused by their lack of training in how to deal with non-cyber and cyber forms of bullying. Perhaps then, training in all forms of bullying ought to be included in staff professional development opportunities.

6.4.1.7 Organising theme: Peer support.

To complement and enrich the usual approach of seeking support from staff, students suggested the additional option of reporting bullying to other students in school within a peer-support group. This would enable students to use a resource that is available to every school, relatively inexpensive to provide and it may relieve the pressure students may feel about approaching staff about bullying issues. The diversity of approaches that the school could adopt as part of an anti-bullying support agenda were as follows:

- lunch time and after school drop-in sessions;
- one-to-one support; and
- anti-bullying campaign or peer-support group.

The degree to which the anti-bullying peer support group was accessible and integrated into the whole school approach used to address bullying was viewed as a contributing factor to its success. Earning respect and credibility from fellow students would be dependent upon:

(a) raising awareness of its existence through the use of assemblies, newsletters, posters and presentations,
(b) ensuring suitable space available for students to access this activity and
(c) it being available several times a week at set times both during and after school.

It was suggested that members of the anti-bullying peer support group would consist of students who were representatives on the school council or Year group leaders. These students were viewed as having the personal qualities and skills needed to provide support to those students who reported bullying incidents which included being:

- dependable;
- sensible;
- trustworthy;
- friendly and approachable;
- empathetic; and
- good communicators.
Peer support is not a naturally established peer relationship that students form. Understandably some students voiced their apprehension about approaching unfamiliar peers to speak to them about issues relating to bullying. One factor that could help students overcome this apprehension was to have the option to talk to students who had personal experiences of being bullied. According to students, they would have the advantage of having experiential knowledge and expertise to help them figure out a way of getting through the bullying. This commonality could inspire hope and help encourage the development of a relationship that is equal, accepting and respectful.

Comments were made about the support available within the anti-bullying support group being age appropriate. Students were candid about this and pointed out that separate peer support groups based on age would need to be made available to students. They were alert to the fact that Year 7 students were more than likely to encounter different forms and types of bullying than students in Years 10 and 11. Furthermore, they recognised that it would be daunting for Year 7 students to speak about their experiences of bullying within a group mainly composed of older students. Similarly, older students would reject any peer support offered if they had to divulge information about their encounters of bullying in front of younger students as this would be embarrassing.

It was mentioned that designated members of staff responsible for co-ordinating the smooth running of the peer-support groups would need to have protected time so that they were available to deliver training in order to equip students with the capacity, knowledge and skills to fulfil this role appropriately. Specific members of staff would also need to embark on the day-to-day overseeing of the support group, although, it was expected that this would not be overly intrusive. Students were also of the opinion that steps should be taken to mitigate potential risks for students undertaking this role. This was particularly important if and when more serious aspects of bullying had to be dealt with. Staff would be required to reduce the pressure and level of responsibility placed upon them in dealing with such incidents.

It is evident that students from this study identified key aspects to the success of anti-bullying peer support groups. Cowie and Smith (2010) also confirmed the importance of crucial elements such as the selection and training of peer supporters; the gender balance in recruitment (there are often more girl than boy volunteers, particularly in the secondary sector); adequate and continuing supervision by an accessible member of staff; effective promotion of the scheme; and sufficient take-up that peer supporters feel positive in their role. They also noted that schools that make students aware of school peer support groups, through the use of
assemblies, newsletters, posters and presentations, often find that the scheme becomes more accepted, and the peer mentors earn respect and credibility from fellow pupils.

6.4.2 Future proposals for e-safety work

The increasing use of ICT by young people to cyberbully is likely to be attributed to the rapid increase and pervasive presence of mobile technologies such as Smartphones. Findings from phase 1 of this study suggest that Smartphones certainly pervade the lives of children and young people. They provide 24 hour online access and pose greater challenges in relation to supervision of young people’s online behaviours. Smartphones have many functions and applications which young people make use of to stay connected with their peers. Unfortunately, while many young people safely use these functions to navigate the online world, others do not.

E-safety education in school will need to keep pace with changing technology, such as Smartphones and with changing youth culture, such as the migration of social networking from Facebook to Twitter.

Currently, within e-safety education, technical solutions such as blocking the individual carrying out the cyberbullying, implementing privacy settings, changing email address, refraining from visiting a particular site and saving evidence of cyberbullying are often suggested as ways of using the technology to counter cyberbullying. However, cyberbullying is not just about technology. Within e-safety work, students are also often advised not to share their details or communicate with strangers. Whether such advice is helpful or realistic is questionable. For example, Perren et al. (2012) suggest that the evidence in support of technological solutions is unclear as such approaches, may serve to return the bullying to the schoolyard. It is also important to highlight that the pattern of life young people lead on Facebook is a public one of self-advertisement and self-expression and life for young people online is all about meeting new people (Katz, 2012).

Griefing rarely mentioned in previous research on cyberbullying was the third most common form of unpleasant cyber incident students experienced. This is when online gaming players are singled out specifically to make their gaming experience less enjoyable. In the researcher’s experience as an EP, many young people have disclosed that they engage in playing over 18 games. Many of these games contain graphic violent content which seems to glorify aggression and violence, they contain strong sexual content and there are often explicit references to vulgar language and discrimination. Many young people talk openly about their enjoyment of playing such games and it appears as if they have become desensitised towards such graphic
content. Within e-safety work, age ratings of games should be a focus; students should be asked to consider treating these ratings the same way that they would treat film classifications. Young people under 18 years of age would not be permitted to purchase or watch an over 18 movie at the cinema. More importantly students should be given the opportunity to think about defining their values and how to make responsible choices that reflect those values. Furthermore, in Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs), the presence of such a large online community of anonymous strangers and the unfiltered, unmoderated discussions, can pose a variety of potential risks. Safety considerations ought to be addressed in more detail, including inappropriate material, unwanted contact from others, risks caused by a student's own behaviour and the behaviour of others.

Another worrying finding from the study is students’ experiences of sexting which has also received little attention in previous research. Sexting is a relatively recent phenomenon that some young people engage in without fully understanding the implications or consequences of sharing sexual images of themselves or others online. Research by the Pew Centre in America (Lenhart, 2009) states that sexting is an adolescent reality that is here to stay. Adolescents sext to show off, to attract someone, to show interest in someone, or to prove their commitment and loyalty. Sexting behaviours reveal wider sexual pressures that young people, particularly girls face. Qualitative research carried out by the NSPCC (Ringrose, Gill, Livingstone & Harvey, 2012) suggest that sexting is shaped by the gender dynamics of peer groups and it reinforces some of the negative social stereotypes about the relationships between boys and girls. What is essential is for e-safety education to support prevention and incorporate teaching young people to understand the legal implications and the impact sexting may have on themselves and on others. The idea of critical thinking and encouraging students to make ethical choices about what they do or create online is important.

Typical e-safety advice given to young people is about being careful who they contact, or keeping their profile private; however, in relation to sexting this misses the point. Young people are often pressured to participate in sexting by their peers not strangers. Therefore, the focus of e-safety work needs to shift towards reducing the risk and pressures that young people face from their peers, not strangers. These pressures need to be made visible, available for discussion and therefore potentially open to resolution. Sexting is a complicated and sensitive issue; most youngsters will be reluctant to seek support from adults as reporting that they have received, shared or forwarded intimate images is likely to cause embarrassment. Ringrose et al. (2012) suggest that to overcome the culture of silence and embarrassment, staff should develop an explicit discourse that recognises, critiques and redresses the sexual pressures faced by young people. Staff should be willing to discuss sexual matters, as part of existing e-safety work. The role, responsibility and experiences of both girls and boys in relation to sexting also
deserve attention. Furthermore, with the uptake of Smartphones by younger students along with significantly higher incidents of unpleasant cyber experiences, similar e-safety work ought to be developed for primary aged children and for supporting transitions into secondary school.

Findings from phase 1 of the study also revealed that experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents often took place within pre-existing relationships. Perhaps a larger part of e-safety work should focus on the differences between real and virtual relationships as well as on the quality of interpersonal relationships. Having dedicated and planned time within the curriculum for open dialogue about peer relationships would enable students to debate ethical questions around specific issues, identify their rights in relation to bullying and learn to manage their own interpersonal conflicts. It could also provoke interesting discussion about the role of bystanders within cyberbullying, focusing on their civic duty and moral obligations in helping others. The concept of a digital citizen incorporates the idea of the informed student taking responsibility. Once a programme like this is embedded, students may be more willing to assert their rights and report incidents of bullying. The challenge is to “motivate students to act upon what they have learned and to behave safely and responsibly online in what becomes a normative manner” (Katz, 2012, p. 107).

Less than a quarter of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident had reported the incident to a member of staff at school. During phase 2 of the study, students cited the following reasons for not seeking help: lack of confidence in the ability and capacity of staff to understand or address the situation appropriately; fear the cyberbullying will be trivialised or that they will be blamed and concerns about the repercussions of being labelled an informant by their peers. These kinds of responses appear to challenge the assumption of students always having to rely on staff to sort out bullying situations. A larger percentage (64.5%) of students indicated that when faced with unpleasant cyber incidents they were more likely to confide in a friend. Within the focus group discussions students spoke positively about having the option to access support from peers. Peers were viewed as an available and accessible resource. Given the ‘digital divide’ (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008), perhaps peers would have the experiential knowledge to help guide students through their cyberbullying ordeal. Hence, e-safety and other anti-bullying initiatives in school might want to focus on increasing students’ autonomy and self-efficacy by signposting students to sources of help provided by peers. For instance, a web tool or text message service could be created for reporting cyberbullying to peers and interventions targeted at setting up peer-support networks and/or a cyberbullying taskforce are a much needed way forward. That being said, adults should not give up trying to help students. Students participating in the focus group discussions suggested several aspects that could facilitate the reporting of bullying to staff, namely reporting routes being varied, accessible and straight forward to use.
Students participating in phase 2 of the study were of the opinion that school staff did not place importance on anti-bullying initiatives. This was because anti-bullying work was usually only carried out during Anti-Bullying Week. Students considered this one-off piece of work inadequate and meaningless. In the researcher’s experience as an EP, e-safety work in schools is also often delivered in one intense session usually by outside agencies known as Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) trained learning partners. Such infrequent and ad-hoc pieces of work are not suitable as many students will struggle to absorb this information from just one session and absent students will miss out on the learning opportunity altogether. E-safety work in schools needs to enter a new phase and approaches used need to be consistent rather than an occasional ad hoc effort. In dealing with cyberbullying, a progressive and staged approach to e-safety work is required with recaps and checks to assess what students have understood before moving on.

Lastly, students did not appreciate the current top-down approach school staff applied to anti-bullying initiatives or e-safety education. It is worth noting that none of the students participating in phase 2 of the study had been directed to read the school’s anti-bullying policy, it therefore held little meaning to students’ lives. The unilateral imposition of school rules or anti-bullying policies and initiatives does little to engage students in a grounded understanding of why they are needed and should be respected. Students spoke candidly about wanting to be given meaningful opportunities to be actively involved in devising and promoting anti-bullying policies and initiatives within school. These opportunities would occur across the curriculum as an integral part of school education. If students were more involved in developing anti-bullying policies and initiatives; it would hopefully leave them feeling more informed, it could give them a sense of ownership over approaches decided upon and their motivation for adhering to anti-bullying initiatives and policies could increase. Furthermore, an anti-bullying policy devised by the whole school community could be a useful tool and give students, staff and parents reassurance and a framework within which to operate if any incidents of bullying need to be reported. However, in order to garner staff support considerable pre-implementation planning, discussion and training is needed otherwise it is just an empty gesture (Katz, 2012). Furthermore, leadership teams in school will need to be mindful of upholding measures and commitments in place.
6.5 A proposed theoretical framework for conceptualising cyberbullying at the contextual level

Within cyberbullying the context of roles necessitates refining the basic definition of bullying, from a dyadic (agent–target) to a triadic (agent–target–bystander) perspective (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, Gies & Hess, 2001). From this point of view, cyberbullying committed via instant messengers and social networking services can be regarded as a group phenomenon as it is a triadic social process in which young people are either intentionally or unintentionally involved as agents, targets or bystanders. With regards to the conceptualisation of cyberbullying, consensus about this has not yet been reached. However, it seems as if the specificities of online and mobile communication reinforce the features of non-cyber forms of bullying while adding unique elements that extend the scope of bullying in distinctive ways. These unique elements discussed briefly in Chapter 2 within Section 2.6 are linked to young people’s online behaviour and their perception about the online world that differentiates it from non-cyber forms of bullying. Figure 6.1 shown on the following page illustrates a proposed theoretical framework, showing the triadic relationship within the context of cyberbullying. At the contextual level, there are eight characteristic components of cyberbullying. Each of these will be discussed in conjunction with the findings from this study and the cyberbullying literature.
6.5.1 Anonymity.

According to Brown et al. (2006) cyberbullying facilitates the illusion of invisibility as there is more opportunity to remain anonymous. It has been suggested by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004), that the ability to conceal one’s identity in cyber space, affords a “unique method of asserting dominance online that conventional bullying disallows” (p.1313). This unique method of gaining power is often referred to as “dissociative anonymity” (Suler, 2004, p.322). The potential to withhold or assume alternate identities, amplifies the feeling of power which, for some individuals emboldens behaviours and affords them the opportunity to communicate in abusive ways online that they perhaps normally would not undertake in personal encounters in real life (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Willard, 2003). Given the aspect of anonymity, Englander and Muldowney (2007) describe cyberbullying as an opportunistic offense, it results in harm without physical interaction, requires little planning, and reduces the threat of being caught.
The results from this study revealed that 35.5% of students indicated that the identity of the person carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents was unknown. This finding partially supports the aspect of anonymity in cyberbullying. However, this is not to say that the issue of anonymity should be minimised. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) argue that anonymity can lead to other potential dangers. Children are often naïve and trusting of others and simultaneously are in need of attention and affection. These potential dangers arise from a so-called online friend who uses identity deception to sound just like any other youth, using chatrooms to form relationships but instead they are trying to entice youngsters into illicit interactions. To offset online risks and promote cybersafety it is important to empower young people with the knowledge and technical expertise to protect themselves. Developing net-savvy youngsters includes the ability to discriminate between ambiguous events and exchanges which are potentially threatening. O’Connell (2001) highlights the importance of youngsters needing to require the skills to be able to mediate the potentially harmful intent of others on the net and decloak the power of online anonymity.

6.5.2 Absence of non-verbal social cues.

Although interaction in cyberspace is becoming more visual due to the use of face-timing and Skype, the agent of cyberbullying is not usually directly and immediately confronted with the harm that he or she causes. Virtual communication lacks access to a whole host of visual information, such as that provided by facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice and physical gestures all of which are often responsible for modifying behaviour through the automatic activation of empathy which inhibits acts of aggression (Suler, 2004).

Thus, a combination of anonymity and/or the disembodied nature of online interactions may lead to a loss of self-control and the absence of restraints in social behaviour typical of direct interaction, implying a reduction in concerns for self-representation and the judgment of others (Suler, 2004). The feeling of distance and lack of non-verbal social cues along with supposed anonymity creates more opportunities for perpetrating abuse, which tends to take more sophisticated and often more hurtful forms. For those individuals who are the targets of unpleasant cyber incidents, higher levels of cruelty combined with not knowing the identity of the person carrying out the cyberbullying is likely to create a significant amount of emotional stress.

The interpretation of online communication, by lack of non-verbal cues, is sometimes challenging and can easily derail into misunderstandings (Ybarra, et al., 2007). Those
individuals who send hurtful or provocative messages may be unaware of how their messages could be interpreted and the potential emotional stress they may cause. Furthermore, not seeing the person they are targeting may cause some youngsters to remain unconvinced that they are actually harming or hurting someone, this phenomenon is referred to as ‘dissociative imagination’ (Suler, 2004). People may be convinced that their virtual characters only exist in cyberspace, which they consider to be a dream world or a fictional computer game, because they dissociate online fiction from offline reality. Cyberbullies who argue this way, may be genuinely convinced that they are not doing anything wrong, since they consider cyberbullying to be an imaginary act of bullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2007).

When reflecting on the above information it seems apparent that the impersonal nature and the anonymity offered by virtual communication results in many young people not understanding the consequences of their online actions. It would appear that an important role for school staff is to work with students to enable them to understand the real emotional and psychological impact cyberbullying can have. This, in part, involves educating young people that the online world is just as real as the offline world and that their actions can have a serious impact on others.

6.5.3 Limited adult supervision.

The degree of control and/or supervision by school staff and parents over young people’s activities in cyberspace is much less than their control over young people’s activities in real life. This has become more apparent since the advent of mobile technologies such as Smartphones. The major shift to using Smartphones has meant that young people prefer to access the Internet via their mobile phone rather than a shared computer at home. With their Smartphone they can continually access the Internet anywhere they go and keep all their interactions private away from the prying eyes of parents.

Based on the results of this study, lack of adult supervision appears to be a predominant feature of cyberbullying. Out of a total of 352 students surveyed, a total of 77.6% of students owned a Smartphone and 57.1% of these students indicated that their parents did not exercise a great deal of supervision or control over their Internet and mobile phone use. The rise in young people’s ownership in Smartphones certainly makes it more difficult for parents to monitor and restrict their children’s online activities. Likewise, staff are limited in the amount of supervision and control they can exert over students use of Smartphones in school. Evidence of this can be seen from the results of this study, out of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident, 62.3% of these students stated that they had experienced an unpleasant cyber
incident at some point whilst on school premises. This suggests that some students are using their Smartphones or mobiles in school to engage in unpleasant cyber communications with other students.

The increase in Smartphone ownership as well as minimal parental and staff control and/or supervision of the use of these devices is largely responsible for young people spending more time socialising online than ever before. Once young people are actively participating in the online realm, it is more likely that they will encounter various types of social interaction online, including cyberbullying. The results from this study confirm that increased time spent socialising online leads to more risk of encountering unpleasant cyber incidents. Any prevention or intervention in school need to embrace the fact that young people are going to spend an increasing amount of time engaging in a variety of activities in cyberspace. Rather than a preventative strategy more proactive strategies to mitigate the negative aspects of unpleasant encounters online are perhaps needed.

6.5.4 Scope.

Electronic communications extends and expands the reach of those individuals who carry out bullying behaviours (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Slonje & Smith, 2008). The results from this study found that all the students who knew the identity of the person(s) targeting them in cyberspace (64.5%) also stated they were targeted by the same individuals directly in real life. This suggests that some individuals are using cyberbullying in conjunction with non-cyber forms of bullying to maximise the effect of harmful behaviours beyond the school premises.

When used in a cyberbullying context, ICT allows youngsters to penetrate the walls of the targeted individual’s home environment. This is further enabled due to young people’s reliance on and reluctance to be separated from their Smartphones. Therefore, suggested solutions such as switching off their Smartphones are not a feasible solution (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Most young people do not consider this an option because it diminishes their ability to socialise with their peers outside of the classroom (Keith & Martin, 2005). Furthermore, even if electronic devices are turned off as soon as they are switched on again unread messages or images are still viewable and unpleasant messages are likely to have accumulated during the offline period (Heirman & Walrave, 2008). An alternative cyberbullying avoidance technique is the option of blocking messages. However, those who are determined to carry out cyberbullying behaviours can change their screen name or set up new accounts so their tormenting messages circumvent any blocks that are set up. Also, those individuals carrying out cyberbullying can go on to post messages and images about an individual on public web pages for the Internet community to see.
In this study, a total of 79.2% of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident indicated that they had encountered unpleasant cyber incidents at some point whilst away from school premises and 62.3% stated that they had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents at some point whilst at school. These findings demonstrate that cyberbullying has no boundaries and young people can be targeted anywhere and at any time of the day. Before the arrival of Smartphones, unpleasant cyber communications usually occurred outside school premises and hours (Smith et al., 2008). Unsurprisingly school staff often question whether it is their responsibility to intervene and prevent cyberbullying. However, with increased incidents of cyberbullying occurring on school premises along with new school-based policies and practice, schools have statutory obligations and clear responsibilities to prevent and where possible respond to all forms of bullying. In particular, The Education and Inspections Act (DCSF, 2006), highlights that headteachers have specific statutory powers to discipline students for poor behaviour carried out away from the school premises.

6.5.5 Diversity.

In the cyberbullying literature there appears to be little discussion on the behaviours and context involved in cyberbullying. This appears to be an oversight. Cyberbullying extends beyond insulting messages, it can occur in different contexts and is carried out using different technologies Cyberbullying behaviours can include threats, intimidation, harassment, social exclusion, the spreading of rumours and gossip, identity theft and impersonation and the circulation of defamatory comments and images.

In an attempt to address this oversight, this study investigated the range of unpleasant cyber behaviours students had experienced along with the context in which they were encountered. Based on the findings, the diverse aspect of cyberbullying does appear to be a predominant feature. Out of 10 possible cyberbullying behaviours listed in the questionnaire, all had been encountered at some point by those students who had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents. The most common form of unpleasant cyber incident students encountered was that of messages and images which contained unkind or hurtful comments. Griefing commonly experienced by gamers and sexting were the third and fifth most common cyber incidents experienced. These are relatively new potential platforms for cyberbullying and have rarely been investigated within cyberbullying research.

In terms of context, cyberbullying can also occur within multiple contexts. At the time the research was carried out many students used BlackBerry mobile phones. The Internet-based instant messenger application called BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) was a popular method for
students to communicate with each other on their mobile phones. An overwhelming 82.8% of the 93 students who had experienced an unpleasant cyber incident indicated that unpleasant cyber incidents had been experienced via this medium. With regards to other Internet based media the social networking website Facebook was also a common medium through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred, this accounted for 60.2% of students.

Another area of context to consider, is the fact that cyberbullying can either occur privately or publicly. Within a private context, unkind comments, threats, or the spreading of rumours are directly communicated to the individual being targeted. Within the public context, comments may be viewed for others to see and make further comments. In terms of postings in the public domain, 31.2% of the 93 students had experienced the circulation of unkind comments and/or images and 21.5% of students indicated the circulation of private information and/or images.

It is imperative for school staff, psychological service providers and parents to understand the reality of cyberbullying in young people’s lives. School staff often have limited experiences with the different forms of cyberbullying and the media through which it occurs. In order to increase their knowledge and understanding of the diverse nature of cyberbullying, they will require sustained professional development opportunities. The completion of a school-wide assessment of cyberbullying in which anonymous questionnaires and surveys are administered to students will help staff understand the scope of the problem. It is important to note that Kowalski et al. (2008) indicated that a school-wide assessment should be consistently reused and revised as the rapid growth of mobile communication technologies might result in cyberbullying occurrences not observed or reported in previous questionnaires.

6.5.6 Repetition.

Based on findings from this study, the aspect of repetition in cyberbullying was a significant predictive factor in students identifying themselves as having been cyberbullied. Many sources suggest that due to the nature of online communications, a single act of cyberbullying has the potential to be repeated without additional involvement from the individual who originally instigated the behaviour (Dooley et al., 2009; Grigg, 2010). The very nature of online culture, particularly the participatory aspect, where witnessing, sharing and reposting of material in general is expected of users lends itself more easily to bystander behaviour that supports cyberbullying and this plays a large part in increasing the essence of repetition. Forwarding a text, picture message or any other online posting means that the size of the audience bearing
witness to the cyberbullying is enlarged, which results in cyberbullying acts being spread rapidly and being repeatedly viewed which can lead to repeated instances of cyberbullying.

A further issue when considering the aspect of repetition is the possibility that the online environment may prolong or exacerbate the misery of the individual being targeted. If a student embarrasses themselves in school in front of their classmates, that incident will haunt them for as long as their peers remember it. However, if the incident is videoed or photographed and then circulated via the Internet, that incident could potentially be permanently on display or remain accessible for people to view and make further comments on. This permanence means the instance of cyberbullying may stay with them for much longer into later adolescence.

6.5.7 Wide net of potential participants.

One of the few firm conclusions made by Bauman (2010) in her review of the cyberbullying literature is that there is a high level of correlation between cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, meaning that there must be a high level of reciprocal behaviour in this context than in non-cyber forms of bullying. It stands to reason, that when the contextual conditions of the virtual world such as; anonymity, lack of non-verbal social cues, lack of adult supervision, distance and the unimportance of physical strength are taken into account, there are much lower risks involved in participating in cyberbullying than non-cyber forms of bullying. This aspect of cyberbullying casts a wide net of potential participants which as a consequence can exponentially increase the number young people carrying out and experiencing cyberbullying and the negative outcomes that often follow (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

For instance, it is easier for the targets of non-cyber forms of bullying, who typically would not retaliate in a face-to-face situation to engage in cyberbullying behaviours in order to seek revenge and challenge the power of those targeting them in the real world. Willard (2007) uses the term 'Vengeful Angels' to describe these individuals. The twist is that 'Vengeful Angels' do not view themselves as bullies, but as defenders of themselves or others. With this in mind, it is imperative that staff in school understand the impulsive and retaliatory nature of some cyberbullying behaviours. Approaches that reduce feelings of revenge and increase one's sense of control are worth considering (Konig, Gollwitzer & Steffgen, 2010).

Furthermore, Kowalski and Limber (2007) suggest that because of the very nature of cyberspace, it is easier to witness an incident of cyberbullying, and having done so, become
complicit in spreading content designed to hurt and humiliate to ever-widening audiences. 'Retweeting', 'sharing' or 'reblogging' a nasty message makes the boundary between agent and bystander a very fine one (Spears et al., 2009). From this point of view, cyberbullying can be regarded as a group phenomenon in which young people are either intentionally or unintentionally involved in bullying as active or inactive bystanders (Ball, 2007). Being a bystander, inactive in the process of harming by choosing not to post or forward but to delete unkind and abusive materials seems to be an important part of the solution to the problem of cyberbullying, as it can reduce the essence of repetition which prevents the audience for cyberbullying from becoming enlarged. This kind of reaction over the Internet towards someone being bullied entails some degree of moral engagement in not being part of the problem (Spears et al., 2009).

Taking the above discussion into account, it seems reasonable to conclude, that co-ordinated and targeted efforts are needed to support the target, agent and bystanders involved in cyberbullying. At a more systemic level, EPs can support schools in taking a proactive rather than a reactive stance in relation to bullying. The researcher would argue that positive changes in the behaviours of all students towards one another in the real and digital worlds can emerge. This is more likely to occur if bullying is addressed within the wider context of social interactions. This view is supported by Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg (2005) who identified the need for social skills training, promotion of social competency, developing skills in negotiation and conflict resolution, and developing friendship building abilities.

6.5.8 Evolution.

The capabilities of ICT have been growing exponentially over the last 10 to 15 years. Computers have become more powerful and fibre optic and wireless technology has increased transmission capacity. The increased capacity has resulted in major improvements in the functionality of mobile phones and other ICT devices. The potential advantages of these technologies are enormous and include phenomenal educational opportunities, great entertainment, and expanding social interactions. However, the pace of technology evolution alters the arena in which cyberbullying occurs. Recently, the use of Smartphones has soared, offering Internet access which is mobile, and private. Along with the advances in technology, new media through which to cyberbully has emerged such as Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat and Instagram, all of which are fast becoming the new arenas to post humiliating comments or photographs. As well as new media, the types of cyberbullying acts are also changing. Sexting and grieving have rarely been mentioned in previous research on cyberbullying, but as the results of this study show, students' experiences of these specific cyberbullying behaviours
were relatively common. In order to reflect the increasing sophistication of the technologies in use, the definition of cyberbullying might need to be continually revisited. With this in mind, it is imperative that school staff; (a) keep up-to-date with the ever changing trends and patterns of young people’s misuse of technology, (b) ensure that e-safety lessons and school cyberbullying policies are continuously reviewed and refined and (c) have knowledge and understanding of the current government policies and legal and educational boundaries for the management of cyberbullying incidents.

6.6 Implications for practice and the role of the Educational Psychologist

Since 1999, schools in England and Wales have been legally required to have some form of anti-bullying policy. These policies are mainly used to guide practice in response to legal requirements. They usually advocate a zero-tolerance to all forms of bullying, state the responsibilities of all concerned in the school if it happens, and clearly explain what actions will be taken to reduce bullying and deal with incidents when they occur. Despite the development of anti-bullying policies and the implementation of anti-bullying programs in schools, bullying in all its forms has unfortunately not been eliminated and most likely never will be.

While it is tempting to think that tighter regulation and stricter sanctions or consequences set out in policies will have an impact on decreasing rates of bullying, it does little to engage students in a grounded understanding of why such policies are needed and should be respected. It would be productive for schools to address the issue of bullying more effectively by taking a step back and employing a wider perspective on the problem and adopt strategies at the school level and beyond. A specific focus on the behaviour of children who bully and those who are targeted may be justified in certain cases, but an alternative and perhaps longer-term solution may be for EPs and teachers to embrace a broader vision of the aims of education. Power and Scott (2014), argue that EPs should collaborate with teachers on a comprehensive educational approach that goes beyond academic teaching. It is their view that the ultimate aim of education is to promote students’ development as autonomous individuals who are responsible democratic citizens and who understand and respect the rights of others as well as their own rights. With this in mind, EPs are in a unique position to support teachers in preparing students for citizenship by helping teachers direct policies, pedagogy and curriculum development towards; (a) advocating and cultivating an ethic of care in which students’ moral and empathic development is enhanced, and (b) developing young people’s views of themselves as active agents in their lives so that they are able to grow into democratic citizens of the real and digital world. This approach to
education could have a greater impact and ultimately help change attitudes towards all forms of bullying.

6.6.1 Peer support.

Anti-bullying awareness campaigns and anti-bullying policies promote the idea that whenever there are disagreements or a young person feels picked on or victimised students should seek out support from staff to help resolve the situation. However, as the results from this study show, most targets of cyberbullying do not alert staff to the situation. Data from the focus group discussions revealed that students were cynical about staff being able to deal with incidents of cyberbullying and many were of the opinion that reporting incidents of bullying to staff was laden with risks. This suggests that it is not always possible and, in some instances, may not be advisable to rely on teacher intervention as a means of managing the problem of bullying. Perhaps then, figuring out ways to convince students they should report incidents of bullying to staff is not the way forward.

An alternative approach is for students to seek support from their peers. This is especially useful for those students who have few friends as specially trained peer supporters can step in to fill the gap. Peer led support gives those students who are being bullied access to a friendly and empathetic ear and allows problems to be shared. It can be particularly effective in bullying situations where there is reluctance to share concerns with an adult because of fears of not being taken seriously, or of adult involvement making things worse. This study found that those students who had experienced unpleasant cyber incidents were more likely to notify and seek support from their friends. According to Perren et al. (2012), social support is probably the coping strategy with the best indicators of success. Therefore, interventions targeted at empowering peer support networks, including bystanders are worthwhile. Students participating in the focus group discussions spoke positively about the idea of receiving support from their peers and suggested a variety of approaches that the school could adopt. The idea of a cyberbullying taskforce, made up of students of all ages with a range of experiences who are helped to identify what the problems are and develop solutions in conjunction with teaching staff was contemplated. Students suggested that this could be carried out within an existing group such as the school student council or a newly established group such as an anti-bullying campaign group.

In fact students may respond better to initiatives where their peers play a leading role because young people as opposed to adults play a dominant role in understanding the processes
involved in cyberbullying. Peers are often present as actors and/or bystanders within the context of cyberbullying which for some students makes peer led support more credible. Within the idea of peer support it is also important to consider the impact of empowerment. According to Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2013) when students are assisted in taking the lead on an issue such as cyberbullying and are provided with training to support that role, they usually report feeling more confident in themselves and that they learn to value other people more. For those students who use peer support they become pro-active partners instead of passive recipients of adult led programs. This can be a critical part of the process of feeling more positive about themselves and dealing with difficulties such as bullying. In addition, staff frequently report that the school environment becomes safer and more caring following the introduction of a peer support scheme, and that peer relationships in general improve (Cowie, Naylor, Talamelli, Chauhan & Smith, 2002; Cremin, 2007). However, a high level of school and teacher commitment is required to ensure the effectiveness of peer led support, as student volunteers must be trained and their work monitored, with staff available to deal with serious issues. EPs can facilitate and help set up peer support systems, they could also provide students with appropriate training in skills such as mentoring, active listening, conflict resolution, befriending and the promotion of children’s rights to work and learn in a safe environment.

The findings from this study also revealed that students wanted the option of accessing support and information from alternative sources outside of the school setting. Those students interested in receiving support from peers outside of the school context could be signposted to a program called CyberMentors. CyberMentors was one of the first forms of virtual peer support launched by BeatBullying, a leading UK anti-bullying charity, in 2009. Students could be taught how to access CyberMentors within lessons such as ICT and the website hyperlink could be made available through the school website. CyberMentors has had positive results because it harnesses the power of peers to contribute to the safety and well being of their peers. It also transforms the features of the Internet which are linked to cyberbullying and turns them around such as 24-hour accessibility and anonymity. Thompson, Robinson and Smith (2013) evaluated the CyberMentor scheme, they found that those young people using the site found it easy to contact and talk to a CyberMentor and found their advice helpful. However, the main shortcoming of CyberMentors has been the lack of engagement of young males in using the scheme.
6.6.2 Empowering bystanders.

The emphasis on the importance of bystanders as powerful moderators of behaviour is growing in the context of cyberbullying (Ball, 2007; Kraft, 2011). Increasingly there is more understanding of the importance of an ‘audience’ for bullying behaviour and the power of the majority. Cyberbullying appears to take place within the context of the students’ social groups and relationships, and often occurs in the presence of cyber witnesses or bystanders. The bystander experience for a cyberbullying incident is very unique because their decision on how to react to the incident is not always public like it is with non-cyber forms of bullying incidents (Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2014). The characteristics of electronic communication are often responsible for making young people particularly susceptible to taking part in bystander behaviour that supports cyberbullying (Barlinska, Szuster & Winiewski, 2013). Hinduja and Patchin (2012a) remind us that most youth do not set out to cyberbully others and this knowledge should be used in empowering bystanders to stand up to those individuals who bully others and reject this behaviour.

With this in mind, an important factor in combating cyberbullying is providing early intervention programmes in school that aim to change apathetic attitudes and enhance students’ sensitivity towards those individuals who are being bullied. EPs could play a role in promoting the civic education of students in school. For this to happen, there needs to be opportunities within the curriculum to engage students and teachers in dialogue about all forms of bullying. The purpose of this is to help students to move to a higher level of reasoning and responsibility by seeing the problems and limitations of their less mature outlook (Power & Scott, 2014). Young people’s attention needs to be directed towards identifying the breach of ethical practices in their own and others’ communication and behaviour when online. They also require explicit training in appraising the consequences of these breaches. Specifically regarding digital citizenship, students need to develop knowledge and skills in the following three areas:

1. **Digital etiquette** (standards of conduct when using electronic technologies).
2. **Digital rights and responsibilities** (what people can do if they feel uncomfortable with digital communication and how they can report misuse).
3. **Digital security** (precautions that can be taken to ensure digital safety).

(Scottish Government, 2013, p.3).

The use of anti-cyberbullying videos and whole class discussions may be a first step in encouraging children to reflect on emotions, this could help foster empathy for targets of bullying and encourage more pro-social attitudes and behaviours. However, there are likely a
variety of factors that interplay and influence the likelihood that a bystander will respond. In the study conducted by Schultz, Heilman and Hart (2014), the rationale that some participants gave for their inaction was characterised by responses that expressed feeling helpless or that an additional comment would cause more trouble. When Gini, Albiero, Benelli, and Alhoe (2008) examined whether the constructs of empathy or social self-efficacy differentiated passive and defending bystander groups in bullying situations, they concluded that empathy did not differentiate between the two groups, but high social self-efficacy was associated with defending behaviour by bystanders and low social self-efficacy was associated with passive behaviour by bystanders. These findings demonstrate that in order to encourage bystanders to intervene they also require opportunities to develop their social self-efficacy. Students need opportunities in lessons to be taught skills in accountability, civility and courage. Intervention strategies which move their fear or indifference to active responses could help stop the spread of cyberbullying incidences and even create a feeling of taboo around the subject (Huang & Chou, 2010).

Furthermore, the ability to report cyberbullying to staff without potential repercussion from the individual carrying out the behaviour may generate a sense of empowerment for bystanders to take action. Students who participated in the focus group discussions of this study spoke of the benefits of being able to access both direct and indirect reporting routes in school. Access to reporting routes that were considered as straightforward to use and risk-free were considered as powerful motivators in encouraging students to make use of them.

6.6.3 Targets of cyberbullying.

School staff should be determined to do all in their power to ensure that students are protected from bullying. However, it is unrealistic to expect staff to protect students from all forms of unpleasant peer interactions some of which may constitute bullying. This is because it is impossible to create an educational setting in which everyone is pleasant and kind to one another all of the time as staff cannot control the emotions, behaviours and personalities of every individual within the setting. Young people need to feel enabled and confident to challenge bullying behaviours. This applies not only to bystanders but also to those individuals who are the targets of bullying. Smith and Sharp (1994) state that targets of bullying tend to have limited self-assertive skills and are unskilled at handling aggressive situations. They are also more likely to show outward signs of distress and anxiety and give in to the demands of those individuals who are bullying them (Berthold & Hoover, 2000).
Steps ought to be taken then to increase students’ assertion skills for handling difficult social situations. An assertive person makes their needs clear in a calm but strong way. Students need to be directly taught how to develop practical and thought out strategies and perhaps verbal scripts for responding and intervening appropriately to de-escalate bullying instances. They specifically need to be taught how to make assertive statements; resist manipulation and threats, respond appropriately to name-calling and enlist support from peers. Scenarios could be written and acted out in class as role-play would be a useful way to convey these messages. The aim of developing such competencies is to increase students’ self-efficacy which refers to people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1991). Young people who have self-efficacy feel less helpless when faced with adversity and are therefore more likely to adopt more effective coping strategies to deal with any instances of bullying. Specifically within the context of cyberbullying, self-efficacy training is useful as many young people may be unable to withdraw from cyberbullying incidents due their need to always be connected and online.

Beyond merely teaching students to be assertive, students would benefit from opportunities to participate in co-operative and collaborative learning. EPs can play an important role in helping teachers think about how and why these learning opportunities should be incorporated into the curriculum. According to Johnson and Johnson (1989) this type of learning enables young people to develop assertive and problem-solving skills, organisational and social skills, the ability to tolerate different perspectives and self sufficiency. These attributes build capacity and resilience in students so they can cope better with the negative effects of bullying. This can be instrumental in enabling and empowering students to acquire and maintain the social skills that will allow them to constructively manage their relationships with others and equip them to respond to bullying in an appropriate, and if necessary, assertive way.

The curriculum should also focus on empowering students in terms of digital literacy, technological skills, critical thinking skills, netiquette and e-safety. Technical solutions such as blocking those that cyberbully, implementing privacy settings, changing contact details and keeping evidence of cyberbullying have been suggested as ways of using technology to counter cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008, Tokunga, 2010). These are essential skills to learn and practice in school, and staff ought to be able to offer guidance on this matter. Of course, this means that staff should be better informed about these skills themselves, since too many are unfamiliar with even the basic forms of social networking and technology (Cassidy, Brown & Jackson, 2012). Students could play a role in the development of this curriculum, since they are generally knowledgeable about technical solutions and also because this bottom-up approach will help foster ownership and relevancy (Cassidy & Bates, 2005) and gives students a voice.
(Cook-Sather, 2002). However, Perren et al. (2012) claim that the evidence in support of technological approaches is unclear. Such approaches, for example, may amplify the bullying encountered in real life. Also advising the target should keep offending messages may be damaging from an emotional point of view as the message remains accessible and cannot be easily forgotten.

Ultimately, technology is not the cause of the cyberbullying behaviours but simply the means through which bullying manifests itself. With this in mind, an additional and perhaps longer term solution to bullying would be for schools to equip students with the confidence, resilience and wisdom to independently handle and solve some of their own interpersonal problems. In view of this aspect all forms of bullying are ultimately relationship issues and therefore requires relationship-focused solutions. This moves anti-bullying strategies from a focus on fixing problematic individuals after bullying incidents have already occurred towards cultivating healthy relationships within schools before bullying can develop.

### 6.6.4 Cultivating healthy relationships.

Basically, “domination and submission result from a break-down of the necessary tension between self-assertion and mutual recognition that allows self and other to meet as sovereign equals” (Benjamin, 1988, p.12 cited in Jacobson, 2007, p. 1942). Simply put, people maintain a fundamental need to both recognise and be recognised by another. Education, then, requires not only a focus on academics, but also, a concerted focus should be on reducing the domination and submission inherent in bullying. In this view, the task of education includes teaching students (through instruction and interaction) what it means to be human together, how mutual status may be fostered, and how differing abilities may strengthen community rather than differentiate competitors (Jacobson, 2007).

It is inevitable that at times throughout their school and adult lives, students will encounter some people they will struggle to get along with or who are unpleasant and unkind. Explicitly teaching students about the complexity of friendships and relationships so that they learn how to tackle issues associated with bullying is important. According to Price et al. (2014) educational settings need to promote moral responsibilities that characterise true friendship, skilling students in initiating, sustaining and repairing relationships. Additionally, exploring the nature of social groups, norms, membership and hierarchy may empower students in navigating such complex influences. The ability to navigate through this social world relatively successfully inevitably comes about through the mastery of skills. Jacobson (2007) claims that instead of just
instructing students how to relate to one another, perhaps it would be wise to create spaces during the day for students to interact in non-competitive and interpersonal encounters. Cultivating healthy relationships within school could be developed through creating guided circle time sessions during the day to express the purpose of developing friendships, listening to each other and practising collaboration. EPs are able to inform teachers about the advantages of circle time approaches and provide whole-school training on its implementation.

Skills learned in these sessions need to be transferable, as young people also need to take responsibility for their behaviour or the language they use when interacting with others online. Attention needs to be given to the discourse that young people use with each other when communicating online. A message deemed as teasing by the person sending it may be interpreted as an insult by the person on the receiving end. As a result the cycle of dialogue between students can spiral into more offensive exchanges (Cassidy et al., 2009). Support in developing social awareness and critical thinking in order to display initiative and commitment in their online interpersonal and group relationships is required. The focus being on acknowledging others with respect, interpreting social situations and communications carefully as well as accommodating others’ communication in a pro-social manner. Students also need to understand the difference between real- friends and cyber-friends in online environments. Real friends are those who the individual has authentic reciprocal relations with whereas cyber-friends refer to people who the individual has superficial online relationships with. With the growing number of so-called friends young people can accumulate through social media, it becomes more important to evaluate the quality of these friendships and begin to separate real-friends from cyber-friends in an effort to create a more supportive and trusted online environment (Wong-lo & Bullock, 2014).

Discussions in lessons should also centre around challenging stereo-types about people based on things like gender, race, religion, sexuality or disability. Dedicated programmes and initiatives need to be implemented, which tackle the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that can give rise to different types of bullying. Students need opportunities to acknowledge and value the things that are different and unique in other people and themselves, instead of rejecting and fearing them as threats. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), promotes the realisation of children’s rights which is fundamentally about developing a culture in which, among other things, the dignity and worth of every child is respected and children are supported to respect the principles of “peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity” (p. 3).” Planned activities like this could help foster secure subjectivity thus lessening the desire to dominate. This type of work needs to be embedded across the school curriculum and introduced progressively throughout a young person’s school life in an age appropriate manner.
Lastly, taking into account the reticence of children and young people to report bullying, staff working in schools need to be pre-emptive by, for example, regularly asking children and young people how they are getting on in school; being alert to signs of bullying and ensuring there are adequate levels of supervision. Most importantly, staff need to work proactively to develop openness, reciprocity and mutuality in all relations within school including relationships between staff and students. This study found that positive relationships among students and staff were vital if students were to consider sharing information about bullying to staff. Students participating in the focus group discussions regularly referred to and valued the positive relationship they had with the PSOs in school. The PSOs were viewed as possessing specific attributes and skills best suited to supporting students who were being bullied, namely trustworthiness, approachability and sensitivity. This clearly demonstrates the importance of teacher-student relationships and how students’ views about their relationships with staff impact on their willingness to notify staff about bullying.

6.6.5 Agents of cyberbullying.

Developing healthy behaviours and social skills more broadly should also be part of the overall curriculum. Patchin and Hinduja (2011) demonstrated that cyberbullying may stem from strain, anger, and frustration which young people encounter within their relationships. Unfortunately, they often lack the capacity to cope with these feelings in a healthy way and they inevitably resort to carrying out abusive behaviours towards others. Patchin and Hinduja (2011) recommend the provision of health education programmes and emotional self-management skills training to reduce strain. The idea of exploring aggressive feelings would also be helpful to those targets of bullying known as ‘vengeful angels’ who engage in retaliatory behaviours and become cyberbullies themselves. Whilst their feelings of aggression may be valid, students should be given opportunities to explore more useful ways of dealing with the situation. EPs have the knowledge and experience to provide schools with support on devising and implementing a whole host of emotional and social well-being interventions.

Additionally, the curriculum should include an emphasis on fostering empathy and positive self-esteem. Empathy is an aspect of human behaviour that facilitates and eases social interaction by allowing people to identify and communicate each other’s emotions (Preston & de Waal, 2002). It is generally viewed as a multidimensional construct and has been described in the literature as an affective trait (affective empathy), which is the ability to experience and share the emotions of others and a cognitive trait (cognitive empathy), which is the ability to understand the emotions of others (Hoffman, 2000). However, generalising these cognitive and affective empathy skills from an offline to an online context is a challenge. This is because those individuals who carry out cyberbullying behaviours may be less constrained by standards of
morality and empathy. This is because their values and emotions are not challenged in an online environment in which they cannot fully see the impact of their actions (Pettalia, Levon & Dickinson, 2013). It is for this reason that Topcu and Erdur-Baker (2012) suggested that prevention and intervention for cyberbullying and non-cyber forms of bullying should not be identical. Therefore, it is important in the context of providing empathy training and education, for students to be taught that the online world is just as real as the offline world. In order to understand that their actions can have a serious impact on other people, the serious and real consequences of cyberbullying need to be personalised, sending the message that if these consequences can happen to a fellow peer, it could happen to anyone including themselves. This work could also benefit potential bystanders. By developing their understanding of the suffering that cyberbullying can cause, they perhaps would be less likely to forward on unkind posts.

6.6.6 School climate.

Hinduja and Patchin (2012b) provide evidence to suggest that students who rate their school’s educational atmosphere or climate as higher also report fewer online problems. In addition, these students have greater faith that, if bullying does arise, staff will handle reports appropriately. A fundamental component in reducing all forms of bullying is to create a positive school climate that fosters caring behaviour in both students and staff. Students need to feel safe and secure; they also need to believe approaching staff to report any bullying problems is worthwhile. Educational psychologists could be involved in supporting measures aimed at improving school climate such as: improving teacher-student relationships; encouraging student participation in decision-making; promoting, recognising and rewarding good behaviour as well as monitoring behaviour and responding fairly and consistently are essential elements towards promoting a strong ethic-of-care within a school. More importantly, every adult in school needs to be encouraged to model what they are advocating through policies and codes of conduct. Often moral messages are communicated to students informally through many different means and that this informal curriculum is often the most powerful teacher (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993). According to Beck and Cassidy (2009):

schools that align with ethic-of-care approaches look at creating the right culture, or the right soil, so that students may thrive, rather than looking to behaviouristic models or rules and consequent approaches for managing the school and containing student behaviour. (p. 56).
6.6.7 Parents.

A final point is that parents ought to be viewed as key partners working with staff towards identifying solutions to cyberbullying. The study’s questionnaire data revealed that students were more likely to confide in their parents than in staff at school although, as revealed in one of the focus group discussions, a couple of students still had reservations about doing this. One of the main barriers preventing students from confiding in their parents was the unhelpful reactions and responses they expected from some of their parents. Educational psychologists, along with school staff could help facilitate parent and community education by delivering workshops which introduce the topic of cyberbullying to parents. Workshops could include, presenting information about the specific nature of cyberbullying. Parents also need support in recognising the importance of providing an environment at home where open communication and trust is fostered so that their children feel free to talk openly about their experiences online. Parents should also be encouraged to communicate to their children the responsibilities, risks and consequences that go along with mobile technologies. More importantly, parents need to recognise that punitive responses, or banning the use of mobile devices may be counter-productive, preventing their children from seeking the help they need.

6.7 Unforeseen limitations

Even though the study provides a comprehensive account of students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents and their views on factors that might increase the reporting of cyberbullying to staff in school, the findings of this study should be considered in light of its limitations. Within critical realism, the purpose is to conduct research that reflects reality, though reality at any given time can only be imperfectly ascertained because of flawed intellectual mechanisms and voids in research methods (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998; Bhaskar, 2008). Thus, research is influenced by our current knowledge and method, and as time progresses and as new developments occur, (particularly in the area of cyberbullying with continuing advances in technology) knowledge can fundamentally change or evolve. Therefore, the findings of the research ought to be viewed as a subset of the knowledge that could be obtained given the limitations of the study. The limitations of the study have been highlighted in this chapter and in the methodology (see Chapter 3).

The main limitations of the study relate to the participant sample selection strategy used in both phases of this study as it was based on convenience sampling. To minimise disruption within the school, during phase 1 of the study the researcher was only granted permission to
administer the questionnaire to Year 7 and Year 10 students. Had the researcher been granted permission to administer the questionnaire to students from all Year groups then the study may have yielded different results. Furthermore, specifically with regards to the focus group samples within phase 2 of the study, there was a sample bias towards female students. Despite the researcher’s best efforts, minimal parental consent slips were returned which resulted in few male students participating in the focus group sessions. A further limitation of this study is that research data was only obtained from students. Future research should consider collecting data from staff and parents and other stakeholders. Various sources of data would be helpful in gaining a more comprehensive view on cyberbullying.

A further point to raise is that during phase 1 of the study, students who participated in completing the questionnaire were grouped according to academic ability. Students’ academic ability banding was based upon Fisher Family Trust Live data, which is an analysis of students’ end of key stage assessment results. How accurate this system is in estimating a students’ academic ability at later key stages is questionable. It is highly likely that some students’ academic ability will have improved whilst others may have regressed depending on personal circumstances and/or environmental factors. It is for this reason that the academic grouping of students during phase 1 of the study may not have been totally accurate. Furthermore, even though the students who participated in phase 1 of the study were of different academic abilities they all attended a mainstream secondary school. In the research on cyberbullying, little attention has been given to the experiences of cyberbullying among students with significant learning needs. It is important to include young people at all levels of academic functioning in studies of cyberbullying as doing this could help inform future prevention and intervention efforts in mainstream and special schools.

It is also important to note that definitional and measurement issues within the research on cyberbullying may never be fully resolved. A complication here is the rapid advances in ICTs and their use. Since this study was embarked upon, there has been a rise in popularity of the use of Smartphones amongst young people. WhatsApp Messenger, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram are the latest media through which young people frequently communicate with one another via their Smartphone devices. Although these new developments in media were anticipated by the researcher they could not be controlled for and were therefore not included in the questionnaire. Thus, this study is unable to provide any data on students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents occurring via such media. These ongoing new developments will almost certainly continue and future researchers in cyberbullying will need to continually modify questionnaires used. This is important because new developments in media may have an influence on a variety of aspects such as gender and age differences as well as the distribution processes of the offensive material. Also to ensure that researchers capture relevant data, it
may be worth encouraging the participation of young people as researchers as they are most likely to have knowledge of the target audience and will be useful in exploring key areas of interest within cyberbullying.

Further data analyses could have been carried out on the students’ responses to the questionnaire. For instance, conducting cross tabulation analysis of the data from each survey question in relation to gender, year group and academic ability level would have been useful in order to examine associations within the data that might not have been readily apparent when analysing total questionnaire responses. In addition, many questions within the questionnaire allowed students to select more than one of the response choices. Multiple response analyses of the data could have been carried out in order to analyse the combination of students’ responses. This would have been particularly useful for questions relating to the forms of unpleasant cyber incidents students experienced and the media through which unpleasant cyber incidents occurred.

Lastly, the main literature review (Chapter 2) was carried out between April 2011 and August 2012. Since that time, advances in literature review processes relevant to practitioner educational psychology (e.g. Bond, Woods, Humphrey & Symes, 2013; Woods, McArdle & Tabassum, 2014) have become available. Such advances bring benefits such as frameworks for enhanced evaluation of research reports and for the comparable weightings of varied research within a field. Whilst such enhancements would undoubtedly have improved the comprehensiveness of the present review, the researcher is satisfied that the transparent and thorough literature review process undertaken as outlined, is sufficiently wide ranging, critical and fit for its purpose as a credible background to the present enquiry.

### 6.8 Transferability

Although this case study is unique and used a convenience sample, it is also an example of students’ experiences of cyberbullying within a broader group of schools and, as a result, the prospect of transferability of the findings and conclusions to other secondary schools within the LA and nationally should be considered. Erickson (1986) argues that since the general lies in the particular, what we learn in a particular case can be transferred to similar situations. It is the reader, not the researcher, who determines what can apply to his or her context. Readers of the thesis may believe their situations to be similar to that described in the study, and are able to make connections between elements of the study and transfer these to their own experiences and circumstances. Firestone (1993) suggests that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the setting of the study is provided to enable
the reader to make such a transfer. Section 3.6 found within the Methodology chapter provides readers with detailed information about the school setting within which the study was carried out and additionally provides information about the other five secondary schools within the LA.

6.9 Implications for future research

It is important to continue surveying the extent of young people’s misuse of communication technologies. The ongoing development and utilisation of surveys with students could assist in keeping track of the changes, prevalence and extent of unpleasant cyber communications amongst young people. This is important because developments in new media are likely to influence a variety of aspects such as gender and age differences as well as the distribution processes of the offensive material. Primary aged children and young people beyond 16 years of age have usually been neglected from the research on cyberbullying. Children attending primary school often own Smartphones and frequently engage in online social networking which equally places them at risk of encountering unpleasant cyber incidents. There have also been recent changes in education, young people born on or after September 1997 must now stay in some form of education or training until they are 18 years of age. This could possibly extend and prolong the cyberbullying experiences of some young people. Hence, more targeted and longitudinal analyses of students’ use of ICT and their online experience at different ages are required. This would be especially useful in detecting (age-related) evolutions in cyberbullying involvement and its consequences.

The questionnaire used in this study focused on questions relating to students’ direct experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. An important aspect to note is the existence of counter and chain reactions in cyberbullying due to the social and environmental processes involved. Therefore, a direct approach in resolving any form of bullying is not necessarily the most effective as an explicit focus on a particular bullying incident cannot address all the factors that may contribute to the problem. For instance, youngsters involvement with cyberbullying may also occur because they are bullied themselves either online or in real life or because they unwittingly forward on offensive material they have viewed. Furthermore, a teachers’ moral orientation in response to cyberbullying, their training and skills to manage the situation or, indeed, their ability to understand the specificities of cyberbullying when it occurs also need to be taken into consideration. The argument here is not that individual cyberbullying incidents should not be addressed, but rather, it should be addressed within the wider context of the environment within which the social interactions take place. Ideas for proactive prevention and intervention strategies that take into account the wider environmental and social context have been outlined earlier within this chapter of this thesis. A possible new direction for research on cyberbullying is carrying out longitudinal research to evaluate the success of some of these
recommendations as without such research it is difficult to formulate evidence-based recommendations. Several possibilities for future research related to intervention work are suggested below.

Developing a ground-up perspective in which the views of children and young people are seen as central could be crucial in preventing and combating incidents of bullying. Therefore, future researchers might want to consider investigating the outcomes of actively involving students in the long-term planning and implementation of sustainable anti-bullying policies and strategies. However, giving children and young people a voice and listening to their views may require a fundamental shift in the way that some schools currently engage with students if it is not to be deemed tokenistic. With this in mind, researchers might want to also think about being involved in developing more creative student participation models. Once effective mechanisms to ensure students’ participation are in place, researchers could also play a crucial role in developing students’ skills in the monitoring and evaluation of anti-bullying strategies implemented.

Future directions in cyberbullying research might also involve researchers in evaluating the impact that different e-safety approaches utilised in schools have on students’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. For example, how does e-safety work that is consistently taught throughout the school year which is designed to promote digital citizenship and ethical questioning around online behaviour and peer relationships differ to less well planned e-safety work? Further interventions aimed at establishing and promoting peer led support groups which are specifically aimed at empowering those students who are being bullied to navigate successfully through their complex social worlds also require some investigation. Research could evaluate the importance of specific aspects such as, the recruitment of volunteers, training, student and teacher commitment, the promotion of peer support in school, planning and running of the groups and ongoing support.

6.10 Conclusion

It is evident that the Internet and mobile technology have become a part of everyday life for young people, particularly since the arrival of Smartphones. Young people are connected to the Internet and communicating online more than ever before which in this study, significantly increased the risk of students encountering an unpleasant cyber incident. Worryingly, few students disclosed their experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents to staff in school and stressed that they were unlikely to do so until the barriers preventing them from reporting incidents were addressed. Notably, students wanted access to a diverse range of reporting routes. They also stressed the importance of raising the profile of anti-bullying initiatives so that
a whole school approach to the prevention and management of all forms of bullying was in place. Once an approach like this was embedded, students perhaps would be more willing to assert their rights and report incidents of bullying.

Staff in schools should recognise the ways in which cyberbullying differs from other forms of bullying and reflect that in how they respond to it (DCSF, 2007a). According to Byron (2008), managing cyberbullying incidents is potentially more complex for children and young people. This is because they are still trying to establish the social rules of the offline world and therefore, lack the critical evaluation skills to either be able to interpret incoming information or make appropriate judgements about how to behave online. With this in mind, there is a need to extend the focus of e-safety work beyond technological solutions and awareness of stranger danger.

Outlining the importance of quality interpersonal relationships and highlighting the differences between relationships in the real and virtual worlds to students is important. Providing opportunities for young people to engage in open dialogue about peer relationships would help enable students to debate ethical questions around specific issues, identify their rights in relation to bullying and learn how to manage their own interpersonal conflicts.

Educational psychologists along with the staff in the schools, in which they work, are oriented towards promoting the healthy development and well-being of children and young people in ways that make all forms of bullying and its effects less likely. The suggestions for future practice discussed in this thesis open up new possibilities for EPs to collaborate with staff in providing more effective civic education. The cultivation of positive identity that includes moral sensitivity and self efficacy, together with the knowledge of effective and practical intervention skills will hopefully help enable students to exercise their self-determination skills in making sensible decisions and taking pro-social stands against all forms of bullying.
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APPENDICES
# Appendix 1: Strands, objectives and aims within the LA anti-bullying action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRANDS AND OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>AIMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 1: Managing use of data</strong></td>
<td>1. Establish a robust borough-wide system for the collation, evaluation and reporting of bullying incidents. 2. Assess levels and types of bullying in school, youth and community settings and compare with current statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a simple framework to report and record bullying incidents providing robust data to inform future planning needs, priorities and practice and to evidence action and impact.</td>
<td>1. Each agency, service and key stakeholder to identify and publicise a designated anti-bullying coordinator or champion. 2. Regular review of policies in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents and carers. 3. Identify a range of anti-bullying initiatives and strategies that support the promotion of anti-bullying environments culture and ethos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 2: Best practice and standards</strong></td>
<td>1. Establish an anti-bullying steering group. 2. Establish and maintain a network of anti-bullying leads to facilitate information sharing and effective practice. 3. Develop effective mechanisms for communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop and maintain a framework for the identification and sharing of best practice and a programme of continuing professional development.</td>
<td>1. Producing information in accessible formats. 2. Develop anti-bullying web presence for the sharing of information. 3. Launch of the anti-bullying strategy. 4. Promotion of national initiatives and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strand 3: Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>1. Encourage the participation of children, young people, adults and families in all aspects of anti-bullying work. 2. Establish a children and young people advisory group. 3. Adult service users to continue to be involved in the development and review of anti-bullying procedures. 4. Anti-bullying steering group to monitor effectiveness of anti-bullying strategy include representation from children, young people and adult groups. 5. Children, young people and adult service users will be consulted about the design of resources commissioned or created as well as their delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To further develop and maintain structures which enable key stakeholders including children, young people, vulnerable adults and families to work in partnership to reduce incidents of bullying.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Cyberbullying prevention framework taken from the document ‘Cyberbullying. A whole-school community issue’

1. **Understanding and talking about cyberbullying** – supporting school-wide discussion around the issue so that the whole school community develops and agrees on a shared understanding of what cyberbullying is, its impact and how it differs from traditional forms of bullying. Pupils and parents should know that the school can provide them with support if cyberbullying takes place out of school.

2. **Updating existing policies and practices** – the school’s anti-bullying policy and/or behaviour policy should be reviewed and updated to address cyberbullying prevention and how best to respond to it. Schools should keep good records of any incidents of cyberbullying.

3. **Making reporting of cyberbullying easier** – schools are advised to publicise school reporting routes to all members of the school community. Setting up a school community taskforce to help identify cyberbullying problems and develop solutions, is a great awareness raising activity.

4. **Promoting the positive use of technology** – schools should promote e-safety and digital literacy to all members of the school community. Schools should also make the most of opportunities in the Curriculum (e.g. Personal Social Health Education and Citizenship classes) and support nationwide campaigns such as Anti-Bullying Week.

5. **Evaluating impact of prevention activities** – as the digital landscape changes so fast schools should make sure that existing anti-bullying policies are regularly reviewed and the success of prevention strategies are measured and communicated to the whole community.

(DCSF, 2007b, p. 3)
Appendix 3a: Pilot Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by marking a ✓ in one of the boxes underneath each question.

**INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) Which Year are you in at school?</th>
<th>B) Are you male or female?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Year 7 ☐ Year 10</td>
<td>☐ Male ☐ Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 1**

1a) Do you have a mobile phone?  
☐ Yes ☐ No  

1b) Is your mobile phone a Smartphone?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

2) Do you have access to the Internet outside of school? This may be via a computer, laptop, Smartphone, i-Pad or console game etc.  
☐ Yes ☐ No

3) During the week, approximately how much time do you spend on your mobile phone/Smartphone or the Internet communicating socially with other young people? This may be via Instant Messaging services such as MSN, BlackBerry messenger or email, chat rooms, online gaming or Facebook etc?  
☐ Never ☐ 1 – 4 hours ☐ 5 – 8 hours ☐ 9 – 12 hours ☐ More than 12 hours
Appendix 3a cont’d: Pilot Questionnaire

SECTION 2

Please read the questions below and indicate by marking a ✔️ in either the Yes or No boxes whether any of the instances described below have happened to you in the last 6 months.

| 4a | Have you received any messages/images that contain threats to physically hurt or harm you? | Yes | No |
| 4b | Have you been involved in an unfriendly argument with someone from whom you have received and returned unkind messages/images? | Yes | No |
| 4c | Have you received any messages/images that contain unkind and hurtful comments about you? | Yes | No |
| 4d | Have you received any messages/images that contain threats to spread gossip about you or damage your reputation? | Yes | No |
| 4e | Has anyone caused trouble for you by secretly using your identity to message unkind comments or images to others? | Yes | No |
| 4f | Have others deliberately excluded you for example from a Blackberry Messenger group or Facebook friends list? | Yes | No |
| 4g | Have you received any messages that contain unwanted rude or sexual explicit comments or images? (Some people call this sexting). | Yes | No |
| 4h | Has your enjoyment of online gaming been spoiled because of deliberate problems that other gamers (griefers) have caused you? | Yes | No |
| 4i | Have unkind comments/rumours or images about you ever been circulated or publically posted online for others to see? | Yes | No |
| 4j | Has personal or private information or images about you been circulated or publically posted online for others to see? | Yes | No |

5) Please think about your experiences when using a mobile phone/Smarphone and/or the Internet during the last 6 months. Approximately, how often have threatening, unkind or embarrassing messages, images or videos about you been sent directly to you and/or circulated around or publically posted online for other young people to see?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Several times a month
- Several times a week
- Everyday

If you have answered Never to Q5, you do not need to answer any more questions.

6) Please state through which electronic media your experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents have occurred. Please tick ALL those that apply.

- Mobile phone text message
- Facebook
- Email
- Mobile phone photo/video message
- Online gaming
- Instant messenger
- MSN Yahoo
- Mobile phone calls (voicemail)
- Internet forums
- Video Sharing
- Website YouTube
- Smartphone messenger service e.g. BBM and iPhone messenger
- Chat rooms
- Other (please specify)
7) Where have these unpleasant cyber incidents usually happened to you?

- [ ] At school
- [ ] Outside of school
- [ ] Both at school and outside of school.

8) When unpleasant cyber incidents such as those described in questions 4a to 4j are carried out repeatedly with the intention of hurting, threatening or frightening others it is known as cyberbullying. Do you consider yourself to have been the target of cyberbullying?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

9) Do you usually know the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

10) If you know the identity of the person(s), does this person(s) also make unkind, hurtful or threatening comments directly to your face when you are at school or out in the community?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don't know the person's identity

SECTION 3: REACTIONS TO CYBER INCIDENTS

11) How do you feel when threatening, unkind or embarrassing messages, images or videos about you are sent directly to you, circulated around or publically posted online for other young people to see?

- [ ] I take it as a joke and laugh it off.
- [ ] I ignore it, doesn’t bother me.
- [ ] I get a little upset.
- [ ] I get very upset.

12) Have these unpleasant cyber incidents caused any of the following problems for you? Please tick ALL those that apply.

- [ ] I struggle to concentrate in my lessons.
- [ ] I feel scared and unsafe
- [ ] I don’t trust people
- [ ] I get into arguments with other students over it
- [ ] I don't think it has affected me.
- [ ] Other (please specify)
## Appendix 3a cont’d: Pilot Questionnaire

### 13) What do you usually do when this happens to you? Please tick ALL those that apply.

| [ ] I save the message or image as evidence | [ ] I delete the message or image evidence |
| [ ] I change my contact details | [ ] I ask the person(s) to stop |
| [ ] I change my username or privacy settings. | [ ] I send a nasty message back |
| [ ] I use the blocking facility. | [ ] If I know who the person is, I confront them about it. |
| [ ] I turn off my mobile phone or log off the Internet. | [ ] I don’t do anything. |
| [ ] Other (please specify). ____________________________ |

### 14) Please indicate whether you have ever told any of the following people or services about your experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. Please tick ALL those that apply.

| [ ] My parents/carers | [ ] Other family members |
| [ ] A close friend | [ ] Boyfriend or girlfriend |
| [ ] A member of staff at school | [ ] Internet provider or mobile phone company |
| [ ] I talked to someone via a helpline such as CyberMentors or Childline | [ ] I haven’t told anyone |
| [ ] Other (please specify) ______________________________ |

### 15) If you did not tell a member of staff what are the reasons why? Please tick ALL those that apply.

| [ ] It isn’t a big deal and people should just ignore it | [ ] I would rather deal with it myself |
| [ ] I don’t think staff would understand | [ ] I don’t think staff would or could do anything about it |
| [ ] My parents may limit my access to the Internet or my mobile phone | [ ] Other pupils would think I was telling tales |
| [ ] It would make things worse and the person/people doing it would retaliate | [ ] This question does not apply to |
| [ ] Other (please specify) ______________________________ |

Thank-you for completing the questionnaire.
Appendix 3b: Revised questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by marking a ✓ in one of the boxes underneath each question.

**INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) Which Year are you in at school?</th>
<th>B) Are you male or female?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1a) Do you have a mobile phone?</th>
<th>1b) If you have a mobile phone, do you usually use a standard mobile phone or a Smartphone?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mobile phone (E.g. Blackberry, iPhone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Smartphone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Do you have access to the Internet outside of school? This may be via a computer, laptop, Smartphone, i-Pad or console game etc.

| Yes | No |

3) During the week, approximately how much time do you spend on your mobile phone/Smartphone or the Internet communicating socially with other young people? This may be via Instant Messaging services such as MSN, BlackBerry messenger or email, chat rooms, online gaming or Facebook etc?

| Never | 1 – 4 hours | 5 – 8 hours | 9 – 12 hours | More than 12 hours |

4) Do your parents/carers try to limit the amount of time you spend socialising with others using the internet or your mobile phones?

| Yes | No |
### SECTION 2

Please read the questions below and indicate by marking a ✅ in either the Yes or No boxes whether any of the instances described below have **happened to you in the last 6 months**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5a) Have you received any messages/images that contain threats to physically hurt or harm you?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>5b) Have you been involved in an unfriendly argument with someone from whom you have received and returned unkind messages/images?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5c) Have you received any messages/images that contain unkind and hurtful comments about you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5d) Have you received any messages/images that contain threats to spread gossip about you or damage your reputation?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5e) Has anyone caused trouble for you by secretly using your identity to message unkind comments or images to others?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5f) Have others deliberately excluded you for example from a Blackberry Messenger group or Facebook friends list?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5g) Have you received any messages that contain unwanted rude or sexual explicit comments or images?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5h) Has your enjoyment of online gaming been spoiled because of deliberate problems that other gamers (griefers) have caused you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Some people call this sexting).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5i) Have unkind comments/rumours or images about you ever/been circulated or publically posted online for others to see?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5j) Has personal or private information or images about you been circulated or publically posted online for others to see?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6) Please think about your experiences when using a mobile phone/Smartphone and/or the Internet during the **last 6 months**. Approximately, how often have threatening, unkind or embarrassing messages, images or videos about you been sent directly to you and/or circulated around or publically posted online for other young people to see?

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Once or twice
- [ ] Several times a month
- [ ] Several times a week
- [ ] Everyday

If you have answered Never to Q6, you do not need to answer any more questions.

### 7) Please state through which electronic media your experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents have occurred. **Please tick ALL those that apply.**

- [ ] Mobile phone text message
- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Video-sharing websites E.g. YouTube
- [ ] Mobile phone photo/video message
- [ ] Online gaming
- [ ] Other E.g. YouTube
- [ ] Mobile phone calls (voicemail)
- [ ] Internet forums
- [ ] E.g. BBM and iPhone messenger
- [ ] Chat rooms
- [ ] E.g. MSN, Yahoo
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Instant messenger services E.g. MSN, Yahoo

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**8) Where have these unpleasant cyber incidents usually happened to you?**

- [ ] At school
- [ ] Outside of school
- [ ] Both at school and outside of school.

**9) When unpleasant cyber incidents such as those described in questions 5a to 5j are carried out repeatedly with the intention of hurting, threatening or frightening others it is known as cyberbullying. Do you consider yourself to have been the target of cyberbullying?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**10) Do you usually know the identity of the person(s) carrying out the unpleasant cyber incidents?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**11) If you know the identity of the person(s), does this person(s) also make unkind, hurtful or threatening comments directly to your face when you are at school or out in the community?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] I don't know the person’s identity

**SECTION 3: REACTIONS TO CYBER INCIDENTS**

**12) How do you feel when threatening, unkind or embarrassing messages, images or videos about you are sent directly to you, circulated around or publically posted online for other young people to see?**

- [ ] I take it as a joke and laugh it off.
- [ ] I ignore it, doesn’t bother me.
- [ ] I get a little upset.
- [ ] I get very upset.
Appendix 3b cont’d: Revised questionnaire

13) Have these unpleasant cyber incidents caused any of the following problems for you? Please tick **ALL** those that apply.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I struggle to concentrate in my lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I feel scared and unsafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I don’t trust people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I get into arguments with other students over it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I don’t think it has affected me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14) What do you usually do when this happens to you? Please tick **ALL** those that apply.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I save the message or image as evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I delete the message or image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I change my contact details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I ask the person(s) to stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I change my username or privacy settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I send a nasty message back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I use the blocking facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>If I know who the person is, I confront them about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I turn off my mobile phone or log off the Internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>I don’t do anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other (please specify).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

260
Appendix 3b cont’d: Revised questionnaire

15) Please indicate whether you have ever told any of the following people or services about your experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. Please tick ALL those that apply

- [ ] My parents/carers
- [ ] A close friend
- [ ] A member of staff at school
- [ ] I talked to someone via a helpline such as CyberMentors or Childline
- [ ] Other (please specify) ______________________________
- [ ] Other family members
- [ ] Boyfriend or girlfriend
- [ ] Internet provider or mobile phone company
- [ ] I haven’t told anyone

16) If you did not tell a member of staff what are the reasons why? Please tick ALL those that apply.

- [ ] It isn’t a big deal and people should just ignore it
- [ ] I don’t think staff would understand
- [ ] My parents may limit my access to the Internet or my mobile phone
- [ ] It would make things worse and the person/people doing it would retaliate
- [ ] Other (please specify) ______________________________
- [ ] I would rather deal with it myself
- [ ] I don’t think staff would or could do anything about it
- [ ] Other pupils would think I was telling tales
- [ ] This question does not apply to me

Please make sure you place your questionnaire into the plastic pouch. Whilst you wait for some of the other pupils to complete their questionnaires, please have a go at the Word Search puzzle. Please also take a look at the green sheet it gives a list of websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues. Thank-you for completing the questionnaire.
Appendix 4: Presentation used during initial contact with schools

Secondary pupils’ experiences and views about cyberbullying.

Naomi Summers
Educational Psychologist
Tel: .......443 6771
Email: naomi.summers@.........gov.uk

RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH
- An increase in a range of incidents of cyberbullying amongst pupils in primary and secondary schools being reported by teachers, pupils, parents and other LA professionals.
- Formation of LA Anti-Bullying strategy and action plan.
- Preliminary research questions:
  - What are secondary pupils’ experiences of using ICT?
  - What are secondary pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents?
  - How many secondary pupils self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Do those pupils who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?
  - What impact does the experience of unpleasant cyber incidents have on young people?
  - When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do young people go, to confide in and seek help?
  - Which factors make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?
  - Which factors make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Which factors make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Which factors are associated with unpleasant cyber incidents?

Phase 1: Quantitative Phase
- Pupils will be invited to complete a questionnaire. Questions will simultaneously be displayed on the Smart Board and read out to the pupils by an adult.
- Questionnaire will contain multiple-choice questions and will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

Planning and administration of questionnaire
1. Passive parental consent letters to be sent out to parents of pupils.
2. Pupils to be split into groups according to Year group, gender and academic ability. Finer details to be discussed at a later date.
3. Two adults to be present in each group.
4. Pupils will be asked to indicate whether they would like the opportunity to talk privately with one of the learning mentors about any unpleasant cyber incidents they may have experienced.
5. Pupils will be asked to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a future focus group discussion with the Educational Psychologist.

Phase 2: Qualitative Phase
- Focus group discussions will be conducted with pupils that have stated that they are willing to participate.
- A maximum of 6 pupils will participate in each focus group discussion.
- The focus group discussions will provide the opportunity to ask wider questions relating to the quantitative findings.
- Active parental consent will need to be obtained from parents of pupils.

Ethical Considerations
- Anonymity and confidentiality: Pupils will be asked to reflect upon experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents which may be a sensitive issue to some pupils.
- Pupils can passively opt out of answering questions if they choose to.
- Parents to be informed about the research via letters.
- Pupils will be offered the opportunity to speak to staff privately should they need to.

RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH
- An increase in a range of incidents of cyberbullying amongst pupils in primary and secondary schools being reported by teachers, pupils, parents and other LA professionals.
- Formation of LA Anti-Bullying strategy and action plan.
- Preliminary research questions:
  - What are secondary pupils’ experiences of using ICT?
  - What are secondary pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents?
  - How many secondary pupils self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Do those pupils who have experienced unpleasant cyber incidents know the identity of the person(s) targeting them?
  - What impact does the experience of unpleasant cyber incidents have on young people?
  - When unpleasant cyber incidents occur, to whom do young people go, to confide in and seek help?
  - Which factors make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?
  - Which factors make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Which factors make some young people more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?
  - Which factors are associated with unpleasant cyber incidents?
Appendix 4 cont’d: Presentation used during initial contact with schools

Professionals who may be involved

- Teachers need to be informed that the research is being carried out.
- Pastoral Teachers/Learning Mentors
- Heads of Year
- Anti-bullying Co-ordinator

Data Analysis

- Data will be collected and analysed by the educational psychologist.
- All data will remain anonymous
- The participating school will receive the results for their specific school
- Results from all the schools will be reported to the LA Anti-Bullying Team and will be written up as a thesis and submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester.

Questions?
Appendix 5a: Parent information/consent letter (pilot questionnaire)

Dear Parent/Guardian.

With mobile phones we often appreciate the convenience of being able to contact friends and family regardless of where they are. Similarly, with the Internet, we benefit from being able to communicate with others as well as having access to information at our fingertips. Unfortunately, the use of mobile phones and the Internet are also being exploited as some young people are carrying out bullying type behaviours via these electronic communication mediums. This type of bullying has been termed cyberbullying which has been described as:

‘an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.’

(Smith et al., p. 376).

Your child along with other Year 7 and Year 10 pupils in the school will be invited to take part in a pilot research project, which aims to explore the prevalence and extent of pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents when using a mobile phone and/or the Internet. This will take place in school on [insert date]. To ensure your child’s anonymity, the questionnaires will not ask pupils to state their names. If during completing the questionnaire your child wishes to withdraw from the research, they may do so at any time. Furthermore, if your child feels the need to talk to someone about any upsetting experiences they may have had when using a mobile phone or the Internet they will have the opportunity to talk privately to an identified member of teaching staff in school.

It is important to highlight that your child’s school was not chosen for the pilot research project because cyberbullying is an issue in the school but because of purely opportunistic reasons. I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will carry out the research, which will be supervised by staff at the school as well as Educational Psychology Service and the University of Manchester.

The data collected from the pilot study will be reported to the Principal of your child’s school. The data from the larger more in-depth research study will be written up as a thesis and will be submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the Principal of the school participating in the main research study will also receive a shorter report. The research will help identify to what extent cyberbullying is an issue for secondary school pupils. The study will also explore whether there are specific factors that make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents, as it is important to investigate whether pupils belonging to specific sub-groups are more vulnerable to cyberbullying than others are. It is anticipated that, the findings from the study will be used to inform the future planning of targeted cyberbullying prevention and intervention work within schools.
Appendix 5a: Parent information/consent letter (pilot questionnaire)

I hope that you will consider the research worthwhile and be able to give your support. You will have the right to withdraw your child from the research at any time including the day the research is being carried out.

If you **DO NOT** wish your child to be involved in the research project, please complete the form below and return it to [Name] by [Date].

If you would like any further information regarding the research please contact Naomi Summers on [Phone], who will be happy to answer any of your questions.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Summers (Educational Psychologist).

I **DO NOT** wish for my child to participate in the research on cyberbullying.

Child's name...........................................................................................................
Year Group........................................................................................................
Signature(s) ........................................................................................ Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
Date........................................................................................................
Return by.........................
Appendix 5b: Parent information/consent letter (revised questionnaire)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

With mobile phones we often appreciate the convenience of being able to contact friends and family regardless of where they are. Similarly, with the Internet, we benefit from being able to communicate with others as well as having access to information at our fingertips. Unfortunately, the use of mobile phones and the Internet are also being exploited as some young people are carrying out bullying type behaviours via these electronic communication mediums. This type of bullying has been termed cyberbullying which has been described as:

‘an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself’ (Smith et al., p. 376).

Your child along with other Year 7 and Year 10 pupils in the school will be invited to take part in a research project, which aims to explore the prevalence and extent of pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents when using a mobile phone and/or the Internet. This will take place in school on [blank]. To ensure your child’s anonymity, the questionnaires will not ask pupils to state their names. If during completing the questionnaire your child wishes to withdraw from the research, they may do so at any time. Furthermore, if your child feels the need to talk to someone about any upsetting experiences they may have had when using a mobile phone or the Internet they will have the opportunity to talk privately to an identified member of teaching staff in school.

It is important to highlight that your child’s school was not chosen for the research project because cyberbullying is an issue in the school but because of purely opportunistic reasons. I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will carry out the research, which will be supervised by staff at the school as well as [blank] Educational Psychology Service and the University of Manchester.

The results from the study will be written up as a thesis and will be submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the school Principal will also receive a shorter report. The research will help identify to what extent cyberbullying is an issue for secondary school pupils. The study will also explore whether there are specific factors that make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents, as it is important to investigate whether pupils belonging to specific sub-groups are more vulnerable to cyberbullying than others are. It is anticipated that, the findings from the study will be used to
Appendix 5b cont’d: Parent information/consent letter (revised questionnaire)

inform the future planning of targeted cyberbullying prevention and intervention work within schools.

I hope that you will consider the research worthwhile and be able to give your support. You will have the right to withdraw your child from the research at any time including the day the research is being carried out.

If you **DO NOT** wish your child to be involved in the research project, please complete the form below and return it to [Name] by [Date].

If you would like any further information regarding the research please contact Naomi Summers on [Contact Number], who will be happy to answer any of your questions.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Naomi Summers (Educational Psychologist)

---

**I DO NOT wish for my child to participate in the research on cyberbullying.**

Child’s name: .................................................................

Year Group: .................................................................

Signature(s) ............................................................... Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Date: .................................................................

Return by: ........................................
Appendix 6a: Student information/consent sheet (pilot study)

You are being invited to complete a questionnaire which aims to explore Year 7 and Year 10 pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. This questionnaire will form part of a small pilot research study. The term ‘pilot research study’ refers to a mini version of a larger more in-depth study. Pilot studies help a researcher identify potential practical problems that may occur when carrying out a study. This means that adjustments and revisions to the research procedures can be made before the larger more in-depth study is carried out. With this in mind, your opinions about the questionnaire are important and I welcome any comments or feedback you can give me regarding the questions you read. You will be asked more about this once the questionnaires have been completed.

I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will carry out the research. Before you decide whether or not you want to complete the questionnaire it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. I will now read the information below to you, please feel free to ask me any questions.

Who will conduct the research?
Miss Naomi Summers: Educational Psychologist

What is the aim of the research?
The aim of the research is to find out about the kinds of unpleasant cyber incidents Year 7 and Year 10 pupils may have experienced when using the Internet and/or a mobile phone.

Why have I been chosen?
A selection of Year 7 and Year 10 pupils in your school has been randomly chosen to participate in the pilot research study. Similarly, Year 7 and Year 10 pupils from another school in the authority will be invited to participate in the larger more in-depth research study that will be undertaken later on this year.
Appendix 6a cont’d: Student information/consent sheet (pilot study)

What will I be asked to do?

You will be given a questionnaire, which you will be asked to complete. The questionnaire will consist of multiple-choice questions and will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. Each question from the questionnaire will also be displayed on the Smart Board and an adult will read each question out aloud to you. Furthermore, if you have difficulty understanding the meaning of any of the questions or require clarification please raise your hand and an adult will provide you with further explanation. If at any point you find any of the questions upsetting and need to leave the room, please raise your hand and one of the adults in the room will support you. Please be reassured that all your answers will remain confidential and anonymous.

Once you have answered all the questions you will be asked to complete a slip of paper that will ask you whether you would like to talk privately with one of the Pastoral Support Officers about any unpleasant experiences you may have had. You will also be asked whether you are willing to participate in any future group discussions with the Educational Psychologist on the topic of cyberbullying.

What happens to the data collected?

The data collected from the pilot study will be reported to the Principal of your school. The data from the larger more in-depth research study will be written up as a thesis and will be submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the Principal of the school participating in the main research study will also receive a shorter report. The research will help identify to what extent cyberbullying is an issue for secondary school pupils. The study will also explore whether there are specific factors that make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents, as it is important to investigate whether pupils belonging to specific sub-groups are more vulnerable to cyberbullying than others are. It is anticipated that, the findings from the study will be used to inform the future planning of targeted cyberbullying prevention and intervention work within schools.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Your answers to the questions will remain confidential and anonymous. The data collected will only be kept by myself, it will also be kept securely in encrypted format so no-one else will have access to it. No names will be used in any of the reports I write, this means that you will not be identified in any way. The data will be deleted after 1 year.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important for you to know that if you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect you in any way. If you wish you may also keep the information sheet that has been provided.
Appendix 6a cont’d: Student information/consent sheet (pilot study)

Contact details for further information

Naomi Summers

[Scrubbed]

[Scrubbed]

Tel: [Scrubbed]

If something goes wrong?

If you want to make a complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact:

Head of the Research Office
Christie Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
M13 9PL.

If you are happy to participate complete and sign the consent form below
Appendix 6a cont’d: Student information/consent sheet (pilot study)

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet and understand the purpose of the questionnaire. I have also had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I consent to take part in the questionnaire.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I am free to leave at any time without giving a reason. If I decide not to participate at any time during, my decision will in no way affect me.

4. I understand that the information that I provide will remain anonymous.

5. I understand that the data collected may be reported to other professionals working within the Local Authority.

_______________________                         ___________        _____________
Please Print Your Name                              Signature                     Date
Appendix 6b: Student information/consent form (revised questionnaire)

You are being invited to complete a questionnaire which aims to explore Year 7 and Year 10 pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents. I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will carry out the research. Before you decide whether or not you would like to complete the questionnaire it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. I will now read the information below to you, please feel free to ask me any questions.

Who will conduct the research?

Miss Naomi Summers: Educational Psychologist

Why have I been chosen?

It is important to highlight that pupils in your school have been chosen to participate in the research not because cyberbullying is an issue in the school but because of purely opportunistic reasons. All Year 7 and Year 10 pupils in your school will be asked to complete the questionnaire.

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of the research is to find out about the kinds of unpleasant cyber incidents Year 7 and Year 10 pupils may have experienced when using the Internet and/or a mobile phone.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be given a questionnaire, which you will be asked to complete. The questionnaire will consist of multiple-choice questions and will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. Each question from the questionnaire will be displayed on the Smart Board and an adult will read each question out aloud to you. Furthermore, if you have difficulty understanding the meaning of any of the questions or require clarification please raise your hand and an adult will provide you with further explanation. If at any point you find any of the questions upsetting and need to leave
Appendix 6b cont’d: Student information/consent form (revised questionnaire)

the room, please raise your hand and one of the adults in the room will support you. Please be reassured that all your answers will remain confidential and anonymous.

Once you have answered all the questions you will be asked to complete a slip of paper that will ask you whether you would like to talk privately with one of the Pastoral Support Officers about any unpleasant experiences you may have had. You will also be asked whether you are willing to participate in any future group discussions with the Educational Psychologist on the topic of cyberbullying. This will be explained in more detail once you have completed the questionnaires.

What happens to the data collected?

The data from the research study will be written up as a thesis and will be submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the school Principal will also receive a report. The research will help identify to what extent cyberbullying is an issue for secondary school pupils. The study will also explore whether there are specific factors that make some young people more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents as it is important to investigate whether pupils belonging to specific sub-groups are more vulnerable to cyberbullying than others are. It is anticipated that, the findings from the study will be used to inform the future planning of targeted cyberbullying prevention and intervention work within schools.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Your answers to the questions will remain confidential and anonymous. The data collected will only be kept by myself, it will also be kept securely in encrypted format so no-one else will have access to it. No names will be used in any of the reports I write, this means that you will not be identified in any way. The data will be deleted after 1 year.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important for you to know that if you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and this will not affect you in any way. If you wish, you may also keep the information sheet that has been provided.
Appendix 6b cont’d: Student information/consent form (revised questionnaire)

Contact details for further information

Naomi Summers

Tel:  

If something goes wrong?

If you want to make a complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact:

Head of the Research Office
Christie Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
M13 9PL.

If you are happy to participate complete and sign the consent form below
Appendix 6b cont’d: Student information/consent form (revised questionnaire)

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

1. I confirm that I understand the purpose of the questionnaire. I have also had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I consent to take part in the questionnaire.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may discontinue completing the questionnaire, should I wish to.

4. I understand that the information that I provide will remain anonymous.

5. I understand that the data collected may be reported to other professionals working within the Local Authority.

___________________________            _______________      ________
Please Print Your Name                Signature                    Date
Appendix 7: Form requesting students’ involvement in focus group interviews.

**Name** ………………………………………………………………

**Form** …………………………

My name is Naomi Summers and I work as an Educational Psychologist for the Local Authority. I am interested in finding out about young people’s experiences and feelings about cyberbullying. I would like the opportunity to meet with young people in small groups to discuss this topic. I would be very interested to hear your views and opinions. If you are willing to participate in a small group discussion with me please place a tick in the **Yes** box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to take part in a small group discussion</td>
<td>I would not like to take part in a small group discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8: Student pilot questionnaire feedback sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do any of the questions have any errors in them? Which ones?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did any of the questions cause any difficulties or confusion for the pupils? Which questions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the ordering of the questions appropriate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are any additional questions needed? Please state.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the range of responses available to the pupils sufficient? If not please give examples of other responses needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were there any practical problems?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately how long did it take the pupils to complete the questionnaire?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9: List of useful websites

There are some excellent websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues.

Beatbullying
This is the UK’s leading anti-bullying charity and has trained a network of online advisers aged from 11 to 25 called CyberMentors. www.beatbullying.org.

CyberMentors is all about young people helping and supporting each other online. If you want to talk about a problem you’ve got with bullying, just drop a CyberMentor a message, or talk to them in the chat room. The site is secure, and you can keep all your chats private, there are also counsellors available for anything really serious. www.cybermentors.org.uk

Another good resource is Bullying.co.uk. Here you can find practical advice for using social networking sites, email and mobile phones. This is an excellent place to start to learn about the most common forms of cyberbullying and how best to protect yourself. This website also offers online support. www.Bullying.co.uk

Childnet International’s mission is to work in partnership with others around the world to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children. Childnet-int.org

CEOP helps children stay safe online. If someone has acted inappropriately towards you online, or to a child or young person you know? It may be sexual chat, being asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or someone being insistent on meeting up with you. You can report it to the website below www.ceop.police.uk

This website is the Education Team at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre or CEOP. It provides a guide to internet safety and safe surfing for young people. Learn about online safety when using blogs, chatting and online gaming. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Phone numbers you can call

Childline 0800 1111- If you are under 18 you can contact Childline 24 hours a day 365 days a year. This service offers counselling and advice for children who are in distress or suffering abuse.

Bullying UK Family Line 0808 800 2222
Bullying UK can offer phone advice and also advice online or through Skype. This service is available to kids and parents.
Appendix 10: Useful tips for students when using the Internet

When you're online, always keep your personal information private and think about what you say and do. Don't share personal information online. This includes:

- your full name
- photos
- addresses
- school information
- telephone numbers
- places you like to spend time

Make sure you have set your privacy settings to restrict access to personal information. When you use chat rooms or instant messenger, use a nickname instead of your real name. To stop people accessing your online accounts, always keep your passwords secret and change them regularly.

Don't open unknown links and attachments. Always delete emails from people you don't know, and don't open attachments from people you don't know. They might be nasty or contain a virus that can stop your computer working.

Think before you click. Many arguments start with a misunderstanding so think about what you really want to say before you start to type it.

If you are asked to pass on a comment or message or picture to someone as "a laugh" or because "everyone is doing it", stop and think; are you being drawn into something that you wouldn't do in real life?

If you are sent any abusive messages or threats do not reply or get into any online arguments. Fighting back with comments of your own will only make things worse and you could be accused of cyberbullying.

Use the blocking facility and report button. Collect and store any abusive messages. Take a screenshot of any comments that are threatening, but then delete them so you don't have to read them again. You will be able to show this as evidence should you need to.

Make a note of the time and date that messages or images were sent, along with any details you have about the sender.

Tell someone. Don't try and deal with this alone, talk to your parents, a family member or a teacher about it.
Appendix 11: Useful websites for teachers

The Safer Internet Centre has been funded by the European Commission to provide an online helpline for professionals who work with children and young people in the UK, specifically tackling the area of e-safety. It provides support with all aspects of digital and online issues such as social networking sites, cyber-bullying, sexting, online gaming and child protection online. The Helpline aims to resolve issues professionals face about themselves, such as protecting professional identity and reputation, as well as young people in relation to online safety.

Where possible, queries will be responded to within 3 hours (during the office opening hours). More complex issues may take longer to fully resolve, and Helpline staff will keep service users updated throughout the process. It is primarily a signposting, advice, and mediation service, any urgent risk to children should be dealt with via normal safeguarding procedures. Due to the nature of the service, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the centre will endeavor to protect anonymity where possible and will discuss beforehand if information needs to be shared with other relevant agencies.

Hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. The Helpline can be emailed at any time, and these will be responded to during our normal working hours. There is also a live Skype chat service available during operating hours – professionals helpline

The UK Safer Internet Centre is also a member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS).

http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline

A second useful resource is Kidscape. This is a charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection and provides advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.


Facebook has also produced ‘Empowering Educators’ support sheet specifically for teachers. This sheet provides ideas on how to respond when a student has been the target of bullying


https://www.facebook.com/safety/bullying/
### Appendix 12: SPSS Code Book

#### Information - Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q No.</th>
<th>Name (Label)</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Year Group</td>
<td>Year 7</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ability</td>
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#### Section 1 – Information Communication Technology Use (ICT)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1a</td>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1b</td>
<td>Mobile phone or Smartphone</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Q2</td>
<td>Access to Internet at home</td>
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<td>Q3</td>
<td>Socialising via ICT (hours per week)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1 – 4 hrs</td>
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<td>5 – 8 hrs</td>
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<td>&gt; 12 hrs</td>
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<td>Parental restrictions</td>
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#### Section 2 – Unpleasant cyber incidents

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<td>Q5b</td>
<td>Unfriendly argument</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Q5c</td>
<td>Unkind/hurtful messages, images</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Q5d</td>
<td>Threats to spread gossip and rumours</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Identity theft</td>
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<td>Exclusion</td>
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<td>Sexting</td>
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<td>Q5h</td>
<td>Grieving</td>
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<td>Q5i</td>
<td>Public circulation or posting of unkind comments/rumours or images</td>
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Section 2 – Unpleasant cyber incidents continued

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<td>Public circulation or posting of private or personal information or images.</td>
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<td>Frequency of unpleasant cyber incidents</td>
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<td>Once or twice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Several times a month</td>
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<td>Several times a week</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Q7</td>
<td>Media through which cyber incidents occurred</td>
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<td>Mobile photo/video message</td>
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<td>Q7c</td>
<td>Mobile phone calls/voicemail</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<td>Video-hosting websites</td>
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<td>Social Networking Sites</td>
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<td>Chat rooms</td>
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<td>Q7k</td>
<td>Instant messengers services MSN Yahoo</td>
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<td>Q8</td>
<td>Where did the incidents usually occur?</td>
<td>At school</td>
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<td>Outside of school</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Q9</td>
<td>Does student think he/she has been the target of cyberbullying?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Q10</td>
<td>Does student now the identity of the person(s) targeting them?</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>If the identity is known, does this person(s) also make unkind comments directly to their face?</td>
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<td>Identity unknown</td>
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## Appendix 12 cont’d: SPSS Code Book

### Section 3 - Student Responses

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<td>Q12</td>
<td>Emotional reactions of pupils</td>
<td>Took it as a joke</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ignored it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Was a little upset</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Was very upset</td>
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### Q13 Behavioural reactions of pupils

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<th>Q13a</th>
<th>Affects concentration in class</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q13b</td>
<td>Feel scared</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13c</td>
<td>Don’t trust people</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q13d</td>
<td>Get into arguments with students</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q13e</td>
<td>No affect</td>
<td>No</td>
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### Q14 Coping strategies utilised

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q14a</th>
<th>Save message/image as evidence</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q14b</td>
<td>Delete the message and image and ignore</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q14c</td>
<td>Change contact details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q14d</td>
<td>Return a message asking the person to stop</td>
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<td>Q14e</td>
<td>Change password</td>
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<td>Q14f</td>
<td>Retaliate and return a nasty message</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Q14g</td>
<td>Use blocking facility</td>
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<td>Q14h</td>
<td>Confront the person directly</td>
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<td>Q14i</td>
<td>Turn off ICT devices</td>
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<td>Q14j</td>
<td>Do nothing and hope it will stop</td>
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**Traditional bullying**: 1
**Both**: 2
### Section 4 – Reporting incidents

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<td>Q15</td>
<td>Who incidents have been reported to</td>
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<td>Q15a</td>
<td>Parents/carers</td>
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<td>Q15b</td>
<td>Other family members</td>
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<td>Q15d</td>
<td>Boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
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<td>Q15e</td>
<td>School staff</td>
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<td>Q15f</td>
<td>Internet provider/Mobile phone company</td>
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<td>Cybermentors</td>
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<td>Reasons for not telling staff</td>
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<td>Q16a</td>
<td>It’s not a big deal</td>
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<td>Q16b</td>
<td>I would rather deal with it myself</td>
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<td>Q16c</td>
<td>Staff wouldn’t understand</td>
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<td>Q16d</td>
<td>Staff would be unable to do anything</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q16e</td>
<td>Parents may place restrictions on mobile phone and internet use</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16f</td>
<td>Other pupils would think I was telling tales</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16g</td>
<td>It would make things worse and the person would retaliate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 13a: Pilot focus group: Parent information/consent letter

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child has agreed to participate in phase 2 of the pilot research study on cyberbullying. This will involve a focus group discussion which is an organised discussion in which a group of pupils from your child's Year group will come together to discuss their ideas and views on how schools can actively encourage pupils to come forward to report incidents of cyberbullying to staff.

I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will lead the focus group discussions, which will be supervised by staff at the school as well as the Educational Psychology Service and the University of Manchester.

The results from the pilot focus group discussion will be reported to the Principal of your child’s school. The data from the focus group discussions conducted in the larger study will be written up as a thesis and submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the school Principal will also receive a shorter report.

It is important to point out that your child's participation is voluntary and he/she may leave the focus group discussion at any time, your child will also have the right to refuse to answer any questions. The discussion will be audio recorded however the identity of the pupils will remain totally anonymous.

If you are happy for your child to participate in the focus group research you will need to complete the attached reply slip below and ask your child to return it to (Pastoral Support Officer) by

Your sincerely

Naomi Summers

Educational Psychologist
Appendix 13a cont’d: Pilot focus group: Parent information/consent letter

Parental/Guardian Consent Form

Please take the time to read the statements below. If you are happy for your child to participate in the focus group discussion, please complete the slip at the bottom of the sheet and include your signature. Please ask your child to return the slip to …………. (Pastoral Support Officer) ………..

- I have read and understood the letter and have had the opportunity to consider the information.
- I understood that I have the right to withdraw my child from the research at any time.
- I understand that participation is voluntary and that my child is free to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason.
- I understand that all the information will be treated as confidential, and that my child will not be identified in any way.
- I understand that by signing and returning this form, I am giving my consent for my child to participate in the focus group discussion.

Name of Child………………………………………………….

Parent/Guardian Signature ………………………………………..

Date……………………
Appendix 13b: Main study focus group: Parent information/consent letter

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child has agreed to participate in phase 2 of the research on cyberbullying. This will involve a focus group discussion which is an organised discussion in which a group of pupils from your child’s Year group will come together to discuss their ideas and views on how schools can actively encourage pupils to come forward to report incidents of cyberbullying to staff.

I (Naomi Summers) am an Educational Psychologist who works for the Local Authority. I will lead the focus group discussions, which will be supervised by staff at the school as well as Educational Psychology Service and the University of Manchester.

The results from the focus group discussion will be written up as a thesis and will be submitted to tutors at the University of Manchester where I am studying for a Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology. The Local Authority anti-bullying team and the school Principal will also receive a shorter report.

It is important to point out that your child’s participation is voluntary and he/she may leave the focus group discussion at any time, your child will also have the right to refuse to answer any questions. The discussion will be audio recorded however the identity of the pupils will remain totally anonymous.

If you are happy for your child to participate in the focus group research you will need to complete the attached reply slip below and ask your child to return it to (Pastoral Support Officer) by ……

Your sincerely

Naomi Summers
Educational Psychologist
Appendix 13b: Main study focus group: Parent information/consent letter

Parental/Guardian Consent Form

Please take the time to read the statements below. If you are happy for your child to participate in the focus group discussion, please complete the slip at the bottom of the sheet and include your signature. Please ask your child to return the slip to …………. (Pastoral Support Officer).

- I have read and understood the letter and have had the opportunity to consider the information.
- I understood that I have the right to withdraw my child from the research at any time.
- I understand that participation is voluntary and that my child is free to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason.
- I understand that all the information will be treated as confidential, and that my child will not be identified in any way.
- I understand that by signing and returning this form, I am giving my consent for my child to participate in the focus group discussion.

Name of Child………………………………………………….

Parent/Guardian Signature ………………………………………..

Date……………………..
Appendix 14: Focus group: Student information/assent form

When you completed the questionnaire on cyberbullying you indicated that you would be willing to participate in a small focus group discussion.

What it will involve?

I (Naomi Summers) will lead the focus group discussion. You will be asked to discuss your views and ideas on how schools can actively encourage pupils to come forward and report any unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff. You will be asked to silently and independently write as many ideas down as you can on blank cards that you will be given. You will be given approximately 10 minutes to do this. I will collect the cards in and I will write all the ideas down on sheets of flipchart paper which will be displayed on the wall for you to see. Everyone’s ideas will remain anonymous. The focus group discussion will centre on the ideas displayed on the flipchart and this discussion will last for approximately 50 minutes.

What is the aim of the research?

As mentioned already the aim of the research is to explore Year 7 and Year 10 pupils’ views and ideas on how schools can actively encourage pupils to come forward and report any unpleasant cyber incidents to school staff. It is hoped that your ideas and views will help staff at school and other professionals within the Local Authority understand how to support children and young people to feel confident enough to confide in school staff.

How is confidentiality maintained?

A report of the data collected from phase 1 (questionnaire) and phase 2 (focus group discussion) will be analysed and a report will be written up and assessed at the University of Manchester. Information from the research will also be reported to the school Principal and Local Authority anti-bullying team. I assure you that none of your names will be used and all personal information or direct quotes will be anonymised.

What happens if I do not want to take part or I change my mind?

It is up to you whether or not you still wish to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you take part, you are still free to withdraw from the focus group discussion at anytime without giving a reason.
Further information and contact details.
Naomi Summers

Tel: 0151 443 5771

If something goes wrong?
If you want to make a complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact:

Head of the Research Office
Christie Building
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
M13 9PL.
Appendix 14 cont’d: Focus group: Student information/assent form

Focus Group Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in the focus group discussion please complete and sign the consent form below.

1. I confirm that the attached information sheet about the focus group discussion has been read to me, I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions, and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the focus group discussion is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that the focus group discussion will be audio-recorded.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

5. I understand that the data collected may be reported to other professionals working within the Local Authority.

___________________________  __________________  ________
Please Print Your Name                      Signature                Date
Appendix 15: Focus Group Script

1. Number of participants present.

2. Record the names of students. Give out name tags. Draw map of where each participant is sat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS RAISED</th>
<th>THINGS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1. Hello. My name is __________. I’d like to start off by thanking each of you for taking time to come here today. We’ll be here for about an hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Greetings</td>
<td>2. Bring pupils attention to the availability of refreshments. Give them time to have a drink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thank you</td>
<td>(5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Refreshments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read out student information sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1. Clarify issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Make sure pupils understand that the focus group discussion will be audio-recorded. Discuss what will happen to the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Introduction</td>
<td>2. I hope that this information will give you the confidence to speak freely and not hold back on anything that you think is important. Your views are important and will hopefully influence any future cyberbullying prevention and intervention work that is carried out in your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Purpose of research</td>
<td>3. Make sure that pupils have understood and check that they still willing to participate in the discussion. Give out consent forms for pupils to sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintaining pupil confidentiality</td>
<td>(10 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obtaining pupil assent.</td>
<td>In order to allow our conversation to flow more freely, I’d like to go over some ground rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Please talk one at a time and avoid side conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2. You don’t have to give your views, but I’d like to hear from each of you today as the discussion progresses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discuss ground rules</td>
<td>3. This will be an open discussion … feel free to comment on each other’s remarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discuss importance of speaking clearly</td>
<td>4. There are no “wrong answers,” just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you’re the only one who feels that way. Don’t let the group sway you. But if you do change your mind, just let me know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage participation of all pupils.</td>
<td>5. It is important that all of you agree to keep confidential the information that individual participants may have discussed. “What is shared in the room stays in the room.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 minutes)</td>
<td>6. Please let me know if you need a break or if any of you wish to leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Main question:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focus group discussion</td>
<td>‘I would like to know your views and ideas on what needs to happen in secondary schools to actively encourage pupils to come forward and report any unpleasant cyber incidents they have experienced to staff?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(45 minutes)</td>
<td>1. Encourage pupils to write down as many ideas as they can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Give pupils time to write their individual answers down on their cards (10 minutes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Collect answers in, shuffle the cards so pupils are less aware of who has written what.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Write each idea up on the sheets of flip chart paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Discuss each idea individually and seek clarification of pupils’ responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 15 cont’d: Focus Group Script

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS RAISED</th>
<th>THINGS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Closing</td>
<td>1. Thanks for coming today and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statement</td>
<td>taking part. I hope you have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 minutes)</td>
<td>found the discussion interesting. Your comments and ideas will be useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Give the participants my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contact information, also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provide them with online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>advice sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Pupils will also be asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to complete a debriefing slip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of paper. This will ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pupils would they like the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunity to talk further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about any of the issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raised with the school learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mentor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Considerations**

1. If some pupils are dominating the discussion

If someone is dominating the conversation, respectfully acknowledge their contribution, and thank them, saying something like, “I really appreciate your comments.” Then make direct eye contact with other people and ask something like, “I’m very interested in hearing how other people are feeling about this issue” or “It’s very interesting to get a variety of perspectives, and I would like to hear from other people as well.”

“How about a different view point?”

“Is there another way to look at this?”

2. If discussion topic wanders

“Thank you for that interesting idea. Perhaps we can discuss it in a separate session. For the purposes of exploring further the specific topics that are the focus of this discussion, with your consent, I would like to move on to another item.” Another strategy is to orient the group to the time you have remaining for your discussion. You do not want the duration of the focus group to extend beyond the amount of time you communicated to participants.

3. Checking out the meaning of pupils’ statements

“How about a different view point?”

“Is there another way to look at this?”

“Can you tell me more.”

“What do you mean when you say?”

“When you say .... what specifically come to mind?”

“What makes you say that?”

4. Moving on from one question to another – making sure pupils have opportunity to give their views

“Is there anything else that you would like to share? [pause] If not, we can move on to our next question.”

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Appendix 16: Braun and Clarke’s (2006) procedural template for conducting thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 Familiarising oneself with the data</td>
<td>I started by transcribing the recordings of the three focus group interviews verbatim paying particular attention to punctuation in order to ensure that the transcripts fully represented the accounts the students had given. An independent coder and I coded the first Year 7 group transcript. We immersed ourselves in the data through repeated reading of the interview transcript. This initially began with reading through the transcript twice. From the third reading onwards we began to make annotations/notes that summarised the main points expressed. A list of all the annotations were compiled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 Generating Initial Codes</td>
<td>The second independent coder and I developed a shared understanding of the meanings of the annotations from which we produced initial codes. We pre-tested the initial codes using a new version of the same transcript, after which we had a discussion and refined the codes. A revised code list was compiled. We coded the transcript again using the revised code list and established inter-coder agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 Searching for Themes</td>
<td>I used the qualitative data analysis computer package Atlas.Ti to manage and systematically code the first transcript again using the revised codes. I also used this computer package to code the other two transcripts. Obviously new codes emerged from the final two transcripts. My university tutor advised that I list all the codes and their corresponding quotes together in a table (See Appendix 21). This was a useful exercise in that it helped verify the quality of the codes. Once I had initially coded all the data I began to re-focus the analysis at a broader level. This involved collecting together codes into potential themes. I started by noting potential themes onto separate pieces of paper and then assigning the codes. I started to note “the relationship between codes, between themes and sub-themes” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.89).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4 Reviewing Themes</td>
<td>The reviewing of themes involved looking at themes in relation to the entire data set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5 Defining and Naming Themes</td>
<td>This phase began once I had completed the thematic maps of the data. I determined which aspects each theme encapsulated which I achieved through clearly defining the scope and content of each theme. At this point I also turned the working titles I had been using into titles I would use in the final analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6 Producing the Report</td>
<td>Once the themes had been identified and titled, the final analysis and write-up of the qualitative results began. Throughout the report quote extracts from the data were used to provide examples and to support the argument of the data in relation to the research question posed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 17: Coding Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annotation list</th>
<th>Initial code list</th>
<th>Revised code list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Easy to reach</td>
<td>1. Easily accessible</td>
<td>1. Accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Always accessible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Low status and skill set of students</td>
<td>2. Adult supervision</td>
<td>2. Adult supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adult direction/support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teacher capacity</td>
<td>3. Availability of staff</td>
<td>3. Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Time constraints on staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Repercussions of peers finding out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Staff intervene quicker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Promoting the support that can be offered</td>
<td>6. Clear and visible process for reporting bullying</td>
<td>6. Clear signposting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Publicising the anti-bullying message in school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Visibly located around school building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Meaningful deterrents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Being listened to and believed by staff</td>
<td>8. Credulous listening</td>
<td>8. Credulous listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Staff taking time out to have conversations with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Not onerous task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Open discussions with students about bullying</td>
<td>10. Engaging students in discussion</td>
<td>10. Engaging students in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Consulting with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Continuous support if needed</td>
<td>11. Follow-up support</td>
<td>11. Follow-up support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Lack of continuous anti-bullying work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Problems with anti-bullying week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. External support</td>
<td>14. Links to outside support</td>
<td>14. Links to external support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Other professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Apportioning no blame</td>
<td>15. No blame approach</td>
<td>15. No blame approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Remain impartial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. School’s PC</td>
<td>17. School’s PC: Jurisdiction</td>
<td>17. School’s PC: Jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Power of the law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Skill set of students</td>
<td>18. Skill set</td>
<td>18. Personal qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Empathetic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 17 cont'd: Coding Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annotation list</th>
<th>Initial code list</th>
<th>Revised code list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. Feeling safe from harm</td>
<td>22. Regular peer support clubs</td>
<td>22. Regularly available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Provide safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Frequent peer support groups</td>
<td>23. Revealing identity</td>
<td>23. Releasing anonymity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Availability of peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Revealing identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Consequences due to delays in staff intervening</td>
<td>24. Repercussions of delayed response</td>
<td>24. Repercussions of delayed response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Threats to process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Being able to relate to and understand them</td>
<td>25. Shared experience</td>
<td>25. Shared experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Peer support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Publicising success of initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Student input</td>
<td>27. Student contribution/input</td>
<td>27. Student led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Student involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Continuation of anti-bullying week throughout the year</td>
<td>28. Maintaining impetus of anti-bullying work</td>
<td>28. Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Maintaining impetus of anti-bullying work throughout the school year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Individual needs</td>
<td>29. Tailored support at the individual level</td>
<td>29. Tailored support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Every case is unique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Taught within the curriculum</td>
<td>30. Taught within the curriculum</td>
<td>30. Taught within the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. Taught within lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Received training from outside professionals</td>
<td>31. Trained staff</td>
<td>31. Trained staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Trained staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 18: Inter-coder agreement matrix

|     | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| C1  | 3  | ?  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | *  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 1  |    |
| C2  | 3  | ?  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 1  | *  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| Agreement | Y | ? | Y | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |    |    |    |

|     | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| C1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  |    |    |
| C2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  |    |    |
| Agreement | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y |

|     | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| C1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  |    |    |
| C2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  |    |    |
| Agreement | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | ? | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |

|     | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| C1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 2  |    |    |
| C2  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 2  |    |    |
| Agreement | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | ? | Y | Y |

|     | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| C1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |
| C2  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 1  | ?  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |
| Agreement | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | ? | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>90</th>
<th>91</th>
<th>92</th>
<th>93</th>
<th>94</th>
<th>95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 18 cont’d: Inter-coder agreement matrix

Responses 2, 31, 44, 69, and 79 had no codes assigned because the responses solely related to describing a reporting method and how it worked.

Response 5: I assigned 3 codes to this response - preserving anonymity twice and ease of use once. Coder 2 assigned 2 codes - preserving anonymity once and ease of use once.


Response 20: I assigned only 1 code - credulous listening and coder 2 assigned 2 codes - credulous listening and no blame approach.


Response 33: I assigned 3 codes – PSO, credulous listening and tailored support. Coder 2 assigned 2 codes PSO and tailored support.

Response 41: I assigned 1 code – repercussions of peers finding out and coder 2 assigned 2 codes – relinquishing anonymity and repercussions of peers finding out.

### Appendix 19: Code list with quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td><strong>All over school (anti-bullying boxes)</strong> (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes like in all different areas so that students can get to them to post their message. (William)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah if they’re (anti-bullying boxes) in lots of different places around school everyone can get access to them if they need to can’t they? (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naomi, PowerPoint presentations would be good because there is a TV screen on nearly every floor there is also one in the atrium and the reception area and dinner hall. Everyone would be able to see this information. The school website, put the PowerPoint presentation on the school website as well. Students can read all the information at home... (Amy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The posters would be on the walls around school, you know... so people could see the information just like the PowerPoint presentations. The leaflets would be like... erm left in certain areas around school so you could take one and read it... (Teddi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Put the posters on the walls around school to advertise the group. Put leaflets in the office or give them out around school at break times or leave them dotted around the atrium. That way everyone can get to see the information. (Lydia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well there’s a specific like ..... email address to contact the teacher. (Joanna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There could already be an appointment system set up online, on the school website so anyone can use it. (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You could have some (appointments) before school! (Zeta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...and what's good about it (instant chat) is most students can use this to report bullying as nearly everyone has access to the internet at home or in school. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah most students can access the internet, even on their mobiles so reporting bullying through instant chat and email would be a good idea. (Zeta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You could put the posters on the walls around school Miss, so everyone can see the information. (Kayleigh B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atrium or on the school front doors so when you walk into school they’re (posters) there. Lots of places around school. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah on the school website you can access all the information (via PowerPoint) you need in your own time at home. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...So stuff on the school website is a good idea cos you can access it at home (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...and nearly everyone has a mobile phone don’t they? (Heather)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 19 cont’d: Code list with quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult supervision</strong></td>
<td><em>You know... I’m thinking that there should always be some teachers that are available at the club.</em> (William)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah, maybe there should be a teacher available at these clubs that you could talk to especially if it’s something dead serious, they could get more done about it. (Amy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They’ll need a teacher leading it, like a teacher who gives them ideas about how the club should run and what sort of questions to ask and when a teacher needs to get involved and that. (William)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah you’re right you’re gonna need the support from teachers as well they need to be there to make sure things run smoothly. There could be some real serious bullying issues that only an adult can sort out. So they need to be around just in case. You can’t expect students to deal with the real serious bullying issues. (Amy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Staff will need to supervise the club. Like make sure it runs properly.</em> (Charlotte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah they’ll (staff) need to give students advice. (Joanna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give them (students) ideas and direction about how to help. (Chloe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Staff need to monitor what’s going on cos some cyberbullying or bullying might be really serious and an adult would have to get involved.</em> (Josh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They (staff) could help run it (peer support group) otherwise students might just mess about. Naomi ... there could be something really serious that a student is going through and a teacher needs to know about, anyway if things didn’t improve for some students then they would eventually need to tell a teacher to sort it out. (Charlotte)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah the teachers could train them and support them (students involved in peer support group). Like there should be teachers available at the club to sort out any serious problems and that. I mean serious stuff needs to be dealt with by a teacher. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah a teacher needs to be at the club like to make sure its runs properly. (Zeta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age specific</strong></td>
<td>......well you might want to speak with people your own age. (Faye)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Well you could have like one club but like different groups in the club. So like a group for like... mix Year 7 and 8 students together and like Years 9 and 10 students go and talk with another group. Cos Year 7s will probably experience different kinds of cyberbullying or bullying than say Year 11s.</em> (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Well you could have different groups for different Year groups. So like if a student from Year 9 or Year 10 is being bullied they go to the group on say a Monday and like any Year 7 and Year 8 students that need support can go to the group on say a Wednesday. Something like that could work.</em> (Callum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix 19 cont’d: Code list with quotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age specific cont’d</td>
<td>No, that would be stupid. A Year 7 talking to Year 11s about their experiences wouldn’t be right would it? You need to make sure it’s relevant to each Year group like the types of issues and problems that certain age groups experience. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah if I was being bullied I wouldn’t fancy going sitting with a load of Year 7 students. I’d probably wanna go and sit and talk with students that are nearer my age. (Zeta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that’s a good idea because there’s a massive age gap between a Year 7 and Year 11 students. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>It would be best if someone was available to answer (anti-bullying helpline) most of the time like... from half 7 in the morning until like... say half 4. (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You need to know that at certain times there’ll definitely be someone there to answer the phone. (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They (staff) give you like a list of times and dates ...... (William)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or two (members of staff) for each Year.... cos there might be more than one incident that needs to be dealt with at the same time. You don’t want to be waiting around for ages before you get help. You need staff to be available and not be too busy and say come back later. (Holly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There’s loads of students at secondary school. What if you turned up and another student was already talking to a teacher? You need them to be available. (Chloe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What about an appointment type thing so you know they’re (staff) gonna be available. (Joanna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…there’s gotta be enough of them (staff) otherwise students won’t be getting the help they need. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…and they (staff) should be available for kids to talk to. (Kayleigh B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well you need enough (staff) for each Year group. Like each Year group go to talk to specific teachers. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You definitely need enough teachers so then they have enough time to support students. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well like.... often (availability of trained staff) or at least three times a week, like in break times or after school. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…you might like.... have an appointment system for this (instant online chat) so you know when they’re available. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You could talk to teachers through instant chat after school if they made themselves available for like an hour after school. (Heather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instead of emailing them (staff), to ask for an appointment well the teachers that are trained could have a list of dates and times they are available each week to talk to students either face to face or through instant chat. (Callum)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 20: University ethical approval

Secretary to Research Ethics Committees
Room 2.004 John Owens Building
Tel: 0161 275 2206/2046
Fax: 0161 275 5697
Email: timothy.stibbs@manchester.ac.uk

Compliance and Risk Office
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL

ref: ethics/11153

30th January 2012

Dear Naomi,

Research Ethics Committee 2

The prevalence and extent of secondary pupils’ experiences of unpleasant cyber incidents (ref 11153)

I write to thank you for attending the meeting originally on 19th September and to confirm that, after the subsequent submission of the amendments, clarifications and additional documents, the project has been given a favourable ethical opinion.

This approval is effective for a period of five years and if the project continues beyond that period it must be submitted for review. It is the Committee’s practice to warn investigators that they should not depart from the agreed protocol without seeking the approval of the Committee, as any significant deviation could invalidate the insurance arrangements and constitute research misconduct. We also ask that any information sheet should carry a University logo or other indication of where it came from, and that, in accordance with University policy, any data carrying personal identifiers must be encrypted when not held on a university computer or kept as a hard copy in a location which is accessible only to those involved with the research.

Finally, I would be grateful if you could complete and return the attached form at the end of the project or by December 2012.

Yours sincerely

Dr T P C Stibbs

Secretary to the University Research Ethics Committee
### Appendix 21: Research time-line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>Cyberbullying conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2011</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2011</td>
<td>Submit proposed thesis plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>Submit research ethics proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>Attend research ethics panel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>Make amendments to research ethics proposal as advised by research ethics panel members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>Received written confirmation that the research proposal had been given a favourable ethical opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Meeting with Principal Educational Psychologist to discuss proposed research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Attend inaugural meeting of the LA anti-bullying strategy group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Design of draft questionnaire for pilot study completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Meet with ISW, EP colleague and Education Change Partner who was one of the lead members of the LA anti-bullying team. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the appropriateness of the pilot questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Meet Principal and Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs working at the school where the questionnaire is expected to be piloted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Provide PSOs with parent information and consent letters for those pupils who will be piloting the questionnaire. Letters are photocopied and mailed out to parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Attend LA anti-bullying strategy meeting to discuss development of the LA anti-bullying strategy and action plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Email PSOs to confirm arrangements for the administration of the pilot questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Questionnaire piloted with Year 7 and Year 10 students. Elicit students’ views on the questionnaire content and design. Find out whether they wish to speak privately with a PSO and whether any students are willing to participate in a pilot focus group discussion. Students are provided with a list of useful websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Only a handful of Year 7 students requested to speak in private to a PSO about unpleasant cyber incidents they had experienced. The Year 7 PSO was given a list of the names of these students. Also emailed Year 7 and Year10 PSOs with the names of students that were willing to participate in a pilot focus group discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Make amendments to the pilot questionnaire as suggested by students. Show revised version to colleagues and members of the anti-bullying strategy group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Meet with assistant headteacher and PSOs for Year 7 and Year 10 at the school where the main study is to be conducted. Provide PSOs with information and consent letters for those parents of students in Year 7 and Year 10. Letters are photocopied and mailed out to parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 21 cont’d: Research time-line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July/August 2012</td>
<td>Start write up of the introduction and literature review sections of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Email PSOs at the school where the main study will be carried out to confirm arrangements for the administration of the questionnaire to Year 7 and Year 10 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Questionnaire is administered to Year 7 and Year 10 students. Find out whether they wish to speak privately with the PSO and whether they are willing to participate in future focus group discussions. Students are provided with a list of useful websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Only Year 7 students requested to speak in private to a PSO about unpleasant cyber incidents they had experienced. The Year 7 PSO was given a list of the names of those students. Provide Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs with a list of students’ names that are willing to participate in focus group discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Start inputting data into IBM SPSS. Begin to analyse frequency data. Consider the research question intended for the focus group discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Meet with PSOs and provide them with the focus group parent information and active consent letters. These are posted out to students’ parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Email PSOs to ask if any parent active consent slips have been returned. No slips are returned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Meet with the Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs that work at the school where the questionnaire was piloted. Arrangements are made to conduct a pilot focus group. Parent active consent letters are posted out to the parents of those students that had stated that they would be willing to participate in a focus group discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Email PSOs from the school where the questionnaire was piloted to ask if any parent active consent letters have been returned. Seven are returned, all from the parents of Year 7 female students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td>Collect active consent forms from the school where the questionnaire was piloted. Discussion with Year 7 PSO about arrangements to conduct the focus group discussion with the Year 7 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>Conduct Year 7 pilot focus group discussion. Find out whether students wish to speak privately with the PSO. Listen to audio-recording and consider any changes to focus group procedure and question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>Email PSOs from the school where the main study is being conducted for a second time to ask if any parent active consent slips have been returned. No slips are returned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 21 cont’d: Research time-line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>Email PSOs from the school where the main study is being conducted for a third time to ask if any parental active consent slips have been returned. No slips are returned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>Meet with Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs from the school where the main study is being conducted to discuss further steps in acquiring parental active consent. Letters are posted out for a second time and letters are also given directly to the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>Email Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs for a fourth time to ask if any parent active consent slips have been returned. Eighteen slips are returned. Twelve from the parents of Year 7 students and six from the parents of Year 10 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>Meet with Year 7 and Year 10 PSOs to arrange how, when and where the focus groups will be conducted. Arrangements to conduct three separate focus groups are made. Researcher checks with the PSOs that the students within these groups are compatible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Year 7 and Year 10 focus group discussions are conducted. Find out whether students wish to speak privately with a PSO. Students are provided with a list of useful websites offering support and advice on cyberbullying issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>Listen to audio-recordings of focus group discussions and transcribe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June 2013</td>
<td>Researcher university tutor will retire at the end of the academic year and researcher is assigned to a different university tutor. Meet new tutor and engage in discussions on how to perform further inferential statistics on the questionnaire data specifically logistic regression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>Start to perform and analyse logistic regression statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/August 2013</td>
<td>Start write up of the method and results section of the thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013 –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>Ill health due to pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014–</td>
<td>Maternity leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Code Year 7 group 1 transcript with another independent coder. Establish inter-coder reliability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October/November</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Input all three transcriptions into qualitative data analysis computer package Atlas.Ti. Code the data and develop themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor – discussed thematic analyses of qualitative data. Next steps: List all the codes and their corresponding quotes together in a table to check accuracy of codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor - discussed draft section of qualitative results. Next steps: make any necessary amendments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor – discussed amendments and ideas for discussion section of thesis. Next steps: Start to write up first part of discussion section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor. Discussed draft of first part of the discussion. Next steps: Complete final part of discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 21 cont’d: Research time-line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Supervision with university tutor. Discussed draft version of discussion part of thesis. Make agreed amendments and give notice of my submission of thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Submit thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 22: Data screening for logistical analyses

RQ2a: Which factors make some students more susceptible to experiencing unpleasant cyber incidents?

Collinearity diagnostics

Table 1: Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>1.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>1.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartphone</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>1.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>.544</td>
<td>1.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>.970</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialise</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>2.091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Eigenvalues, condition index and variance proportions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Condition index</th>
<th>Variance Proportions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.650</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.913</td>
<td>2.257</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>3.100</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>3.317</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>3.686</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>6.047</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>8.679</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 22 con’t: Data screening for logistical analyses

Residual statistics

Table 3: Influential statistic values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential statistic</th>
<th>Influential statistical values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook’s distance</td>
<td>0.0004 to 0.15008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFBeta for the constant</td>
<td>-0.6552 to 0.19847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage</td>
<td>0.01061 to 0.10618.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ3b: Which factors make some students more likely to self-identify as having been cyberbullied?

Collinearity diagnostics

Table 4: Tolerance and VIF values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>1.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>1.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>.960</td>
<td>1.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of incident</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>1.422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>1.362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 22 con’t: Data screening for logistical analyses

Table 5: Eigenvalues, condition index and variance proportions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Condition index</th>
<th>Variance Proportions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>Year Group</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.803</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>2.150</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td>2.622</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.452</td>
<td>2.899</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>3.897</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>5.661</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residual statistics

Table 6: Influential statistic values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential statistic</th>
<th>Influential statistical values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook’s distance</td>
<td>0.000 to 1.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFBeta for the constant</td>
<td>-0.2103 to 0.8260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage</td>
<td>0.0083 to -0.2586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>