

## Cyberbullying: A Post-Primary School Perspective

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### Abstract and introduction

Bullying in Irish schools is a behavioural problem which affects the lives of thousands of children and their families. The humiliation, fear, frustration, social isolation and loss of self-esteem which children can experience when bullied results in absence from school, poor school work, personality changes, sickness, depression and, unfortunately, sometimes suicide. As a post-primary teacher of Religious Education, I am aware that the development of a young person relies greatly on his/her experience in school. Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also emotional and affective learning (RECD, 2012 p. 4). In recent years, a new phenomenon of bullying has become a major issue in schools, cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, defined by Belsey (2005), is "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others" (cited in Butler et al., 2008, p. 21).

I need to be mindful, as an educator, of these ongoing bullying-related issues that could negatively affect the young people I will teach throughout my career. Therefore, for this Independent Study, I have chosen the area of cyberbullying, from a professional perspective, to enhance my knowledge of this modern issue.

Furthermore, my research questions outline the two aspects of cyberbullying that I am investigating:

1. What are the perceived negative implications of cyberbullying on the well-being of post-primary students?
2. What strategies can schools implement, within the classroom and throughout the whole-school, to address cyberbullying?

I was placed in an English school for two weeks to conclude my final placement for my B.Ed. degree. I believe it will be interesting to compare and contrast Irish and British perspectives and experiences on the issue of cyberbullying. I hoped by the end of this research project, to be acutely aware of this growing contemporary issue and the ways in which it should be appropriately addressed in school.

### Literature Review

This section discusses what cyberbullying is, what causes it to happen, the perceived negative implications of cyberbullying for pupils in school, and the ways in which schools can implement strategies to deal with it. It is necessary to be aware of the current literature which explores these aspects before completing this small-scale study as this will enable me to obtain prior knowledge which will influence this research and identify the key issues which need to be analysed.

The term 'cyberbullying' has only come into existence over the last decade when it was coined by Canadian, Bill Belsey (Campbell, 2005). Belsey's definition of cyberbullying is commonly used in

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academic and government literature (Li, 2006; Smith et al., 2008). It was never mentioned before this, yet, in contemporary society, it has widely spread and become an insidious element of victimisation in homes, schools and workplaces (Tokunaga, 2010). It is becoming more and more apparent as cyberbullies do not have to be physically strong or quick-paced; they only need a computer or mobile phone, and a desire to cause terror (O'Moore, 2012). As the victimiser can be entirely anonymous, it allows those pupils who would never bully in the traditional sense to become a bully in the cyber sense (Poland, 2010). Walrave and Heirman (2011) agree and highlight that due to the anonymity aspect, cyberbullying manifests itself in this growing societal problem.

#### *Defining cyberbullying*

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum defines bullying as the “repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others”. It further defines cyberbullying as “bullying through the use of modern technology such as computers and mobile phones” (NIABF, 2011a).

Hinduja and Patchin (2007) outline cyberbullying to be an act which causes wilful and repeated harm through the sending of text messages or emails. Shariff and Gouin (2007) agree but are more specific; they convey cyberbullying to be a covert and psychological form of bullying which uses mobile phones, websites and online chat rooms to cause distress. Cyberbullying can be defined into eight categories according to Willard (2007). They include flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and tricking, exclusion, cyber stalking and cyber threats. Willard (2007) defines flaming to be online aggression which uses offensive and extremely vulgar language between two people and harassment to be the sending of insults and offensive statements to a person or party. Some of these definitions tend to be outdated and fail to mention the huge contemporary issue – the role of social media sites.

As studies on cyberbullying are not as common as traditional bullying, both Hinduja and Patchin (2007) and Beran and Li (2007) agree that all implications and ways to deal with the issue are not fully known yet. However, in a study carried out by Wong Lo and Bullock (2011), 62 teenagers and 75 parents took part in a survey. The results highlighted that 90% of the adolescents stated they had been a victim of cyberbullying. Interestingly, this approach was used in the Olweus (2012) survey and also for the DENI 2011 study. Both of these focused more on the question, “Have you been cyberbullied in the past couple of months?” rather than the broader, “Have you ever been cyberbullied?” It is important here to note the particular time frame which was included in the survey to gain a more accurate result; it makes a significant difference to incident rates. An even more shocking statistic was the 70% who were cyberbullied more than twice a month and the 50% who did not know the identity of the bully (Wong Lo and Bullock, 2011). Furthermore, 89% of the teenagers’ parents had no idea their child was cyberbullied, although those that were aware supported the school in resolving the issue.

#### *Causes of cyberbullying*

Cyberbullying can take place anywhere, at any time. Juvonen and Gross (2008) and Hinduja and Patchin (2009) both agree that cyber bullies victimise through text messages, emails, picture messages and the posting on social network sites such as Facebook. It does not just take place during break and lunch time in schools nowadays; it can take place during class time and at home (DENI, 2011). Mesch (2009) believes that cyberbullying, and the want to cyber bully, comes from relationship problems such as break ups and jealousy. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) reiterate Mesch’s point and develop it further. They state that this ‘ganging up’ is exercised so that the victim’s social well-being is damaged; victims feel that they are the cause of what is happening to them. This inevitably leads to a feeling of loneliness by the bullied victim (Sahin, 2012). Another cause of cyberbullying, raised by Williams and Guerra (2010), is the increasing technological awareness of

children and the advancement in technology. Children are now, even before they are old enough for school, playing on iPads and using their parents' mobile phone as a toy (Mc Guckin, 2013). Children are also being given a mobile phone much earlier now than they would have been a decade ago, and therefore, parents and teachers need to be aware of the use of technology as a means of bullying (O'Moore, 2012).

Calvete et al. (2010) reveal that other reasons for cyberbullying could be a result of prejudice, intolerance, guilt and anger (Hoff and Mitchell, 2009). Additionally, pupils can create virtual worlds and rating websites, notably 'Ask Fm', which can be hacked and personal information exploited (Vandebosch and Van Cleemput, 2009).

#### *Negative implications of cyberbullying on the well-being of a child*

Cyberbullying can affect a victim socially, emotionally, psychologically and cognitively. A study conducted by Burgess Proctor et al. (2005) on 1200 females in a single sex school found that the pupils felt angry, depressed, threatened, violated and, in the most severe cases, suicidal. Only 5% stated that they were not affected by the cyberbully and their hurtful actions. Dempsey et al. (2009) asserts that some victims feel powerless and, even though in some cases no one is aware, humiliated and exploited. Feinberg and Robey (2009) develop this point and reveal that children who have strong support at home, and feel safe in school because of the school's strong focus on pastoral care, are less likely to feel extremely affected; pupils who do feel severely affected are those who struggle socially. Others indicate that cyberbullying has been associated with maladaptive emotional and behavioural outcomes (Hinduja and Patchin, 2007). It causes children to truant, decreases their levels of academic achievement, causes them to abuse substances and encourages them to have a desire to hurt others. When dealing with problems relating to cyberbullying, schools should have adequate policies and procedures in place to deter and address these (Mc Guckin and Lewis, 2008).

Furthermore, in dealing with such issues, schools should act in accordance with fair procedures. In relation to Republic of Ireland, legislation based on bullying in schools, Smith (2013) presents these to have prominence in the school's pastoral care policy. In Northern Ireland, there is no such publication, with the exception of two brief guides offered by the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF, 2011 cited in Stevens and O'Moore, 2013).

Mitchell and Finkelhor (2007) believe that the relationship between online harassment and depression in school children is extremely close. If children feel violated by online harassers, they are less likely to feel safe anywhere they go since cyberbullying is highly pervasive nowadays. Adolescence for young people is a time of great change physically, emotionally and socially. This is also a time when aggression, both physical and mentally, is at an intense peak (Pellegrini and Bartini, 2005).

Finally, Willard (2007) maintains that a child's brain, and its development, can be negatively affected; the frontal cortex, which supports thinking, can be severely damaged by unnecessary stress especially at this development stage. Therefore, students' grades and participation in class will also decline.

#### *Positive aspects of the use of technology*

Even though the internet and technology can have a very negative effect on young people, it can also be a very positive instrument for learning and socialisation. Cross et al. (2009) believe that the internet allows children to learn and socialise in an interesting way. Hague (2010) agrees with this and states "children need to be technologically aware in order to advance in a digital culture" (p. 41).

However, Keith and Martin (2005) and Purdy and McGuckin (2013) both agree “schools, parents and children gain so much from technology but, at the same time, face unique challenges” (p. 226).

*Strategies schools can implement to deal with cyberbullying*

Purdy and McGuckin (2013) outline, in terms of the management of bully/victim problems in schools, how legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2003. The Education and Libraries Order (2003) states that all schools are to have a specific standalone anti-bullying policy, seen specifically in Articles 17, 18 and 19. Furthermore, the confusion that school leaders experience in relation to their responsibilities and limitations of legal responsibility is a major issue. There is a greater need for more guidance for schools in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on issues which occur outside of school.

Most children do believe that adults cannot stop cyberbullying from occurring, and they are correct. But parents and educators do need to show a willingness to help and demonstrate that things are being done (Cassidy et al., 2009). Adults do need to be mindful of cyberbullying and the signs. Dragan (2011) states “history shows us that we have been woefully inadequate from protecting our children from bullying (p. 46). Furthermore, Kowalski et al. (2008) believes that some teachers are not aware of the issue of cyberbullying as it generally takes place outside of the classroom. They then feel that the school is limited in what it can do to combat and prevent it.

Media Awareness (2006) also highlights the difficulty of the school’s role in dealing with outside issues. They do, however, outline the ways in which schools can help prevent and deal with this very evident issue. Staff training should be provided and scenarios given for how a teacher and the school should approach cyberbullying and deal with it effectively. Kowalski et al. (2008) agrees and emphasises the importance of having the children be more aware of the dangers. Rules and regulations must be given and consequences should be explained if these are broken. Children should be encouraged to tell a teacher as he/she will know what protocols to follow to protect the child.

Schools can also have anti-bullying lessons incorporated into the curriculum such as Personal Development and Religious Education. Pupils should be explicitly shown, from beginning to end, how cyberbullying is dealt with and what the implications are (NIABF, 2011). A buddy system can also help if a pupil who is being cyber bullied who does not feel comfortable speaking to a teacher about it firsthand (Childnet International, 2007). The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (2011) does, however, argue that schools should contact the police as an effective way of dealing with cyberbullying. It also allows the children to understand the severity of a cyberbullying situation. A significant development for Northern Irish schools in relation to cyberbullying was the recent consultation on new legislation on bullying in schools in NI (Addressing Bullying in Schools DE 2015: 79). This proposed the introduction of central recording, a designated governor and a newly agreed definition of bullying in which cyberbullying was also mentioned.

**Conclusion**

From this review of literature, it is clear that cyberbullying in schools is increasing as technology continues to advance. The detrimental effects of cyberbullying on a pupil in school and outside of school are severe. The amount of young children and teens using the internet at home is quickly increasing; this new threat of cyberbullying needs to be handled carefully by parents and teachers (Hinduja and Patchin, 2007). It is also evident, through the exploration of Irish literature and websites, how it is being addressed here in this province. There does, however, need to be more guidance given on how schools should be addressing cyberbullying which happens outside of the school.

Children can, however, use the internet to talk to their friends, play games and research information for school work. There are positives to this new cyber world but the benefits are being eclipsed by the negativity of cyberbullying, cyberstalking and sexual predation (Notar et al., 2013).

### **Methodology**

This section will outline the various research methods that were available and evaluate those which were used to conduct this investigation. It will also identify the participants involved and the ethical protocols which were followed.

#### *Two types of Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative*

Blaxter et al. (2001) reveal that data gathered can either be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative methods collect data by using techniques which draw together opinions, experiences and emotions of participants. This form of data cannot be easily corresponded in a statistical way. However, it does provide valuable information through discussion and explanation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

Quantitative data is the collection of information that can be represented in a numerical and statistical way (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Quantitative data can be objective in the way it is collected, and can provide an easy analysis of results. However, this is limited as it is very difficult to measure the opinions and discussions of participants.

#### *The Research Methods used: Interviews and Document Analysis*

Qualitative research methods were used for this small-scale study: semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

There are three main types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Walliman, 2005). I chose the semi-structured approach for this small-scale study as it is both structured and flexible. All interviews were held individually and were audio recorded. Each interviewee was also given the interview questions at least three weeks prior to the interview. This ensures a purposeful discussion could be held, but also allowed for other aspects to be discussed later (May, 2003). I decided not to use questionnaires as they can “provide a small response rate” (Cooper and Schindler, 2003, p. 324). A disadvantage of using interviews is that they can be time-consuming, and there is a likely chance of bias and subjectivity. The personality and demeanour of the interviewer could influence the answers as the participant may respond in a way which aims to appease the person asking the questions (Swetnam and Swetnam, 2009).

The second qualitative research method used to collect data was document analysis. I thoroughly examined the various school policies and documents and looked for evidence which could support the information gathered from the interviews. An advantage of using this method, which is also supported by Bowen (2006), is the aspect of supplementation; data collected here can supplement and expand data obtained using other methods. However, Wilson (2010) does outline that most documents are biased and contain a hidden point of view. The Cabinet Office (2004) calls the using of interviews and document analysis ‘triangulation’ whereby you use this mixture of data to answer the research questions. I also clarified the data with the various participants to ensure that all the information collected was factual. I was also given the opportunity to observe a cyberbullying Enrichment Day lesson at the English school. This was unexpected as I did not plan on using this method of research. The pupils’ responses to sensitive questions were very meaningful and this was an excellent way of understanding their experiences better as they could not be directly involved in this research.

### *Participants and Discussion of Sample*

For this small-scale study, I chose to conduct my interviews in three schools: a single-sex female grammar school; a mixed comprehensive school and a single-sex female comprehensive school. Two of the schools were in England and one in northern Ireland. In each school, I interviewed a small sample of teachers: the Principal, the Head of Pastoral Care, the ICT Coordinator and a Form Tutor. The rationale behind the choosing of these particular schools and teachers was largely down to diversity and variation of experiences. I felt that these particular teachers' experiences, within the different schools, would provide a wide range of insights which would enhance my knowledge of cyberbullying. I also maintain that the ability to compare and contrast between English and Irish schools was extremely beneficial.

### *Ethical issues*

As this topic is very sensitive, I was mindful that I must, at all times, follow the correct ethical protocols. I referred to the BERA (2011) ethical guidelines regarding the aspect of voluntary informed consent. I ensured that all participants gave consent and were aware of what their participation would involve. I posted a letter to the principals of the schools asking, firstly, if I could come in and conduct interviews and a research proposal which stated what I was investigating and its purpose. Participants were also given a consent form and interview questions three weeks prior to the actual meeting. Patton (2001) believes that this procedure is vital and provides a time for the interviewer and interviewee to negotiate any changes which need to be made. Furthermore, I did not interview any children or vulnerable adults throughout the gathering of this research and all information collected was anonymous and destroyed after use.

Whilst creating the interview questions, analysing the school policies, and probing answers during the interviews, I made sure always to be mindful of my research questions. For example, during the interviews I also asked for more than one strategy which a school uses to combat the issue of cyberbullying.

### *Review of Methodology*

Overall, the research methods used for this small-scale study provided me with very sound knowledge and understanding of cyberbullying. I was also given a clear insight into what the different schools were doing to address the issue through various strategies and policies. However, if I were to conduct this research again, I would spend more time on the interview questions as some needed more clarification to the participants (Q.2 especially). I wish I also would have taken notes during the cyberbullying lesson observation in the English school as this would have provided more depth to my knowledge. As it was an unexpected opportunity, I was not prepared. I did still, however, gain some relevant insights which influenced this project.

### **Results and analysis**

This section aims to analyse and discuss the data, which has been collected, through the conducting of interviews and examination of school documentation. Data have been divided into themes, in accordance with the literature review and research questions (What are the perceived negative implications of cyberbullying on the well-being of post-primary students? / What strategies can schools implement, within the classroom and throughout the whole-school, to address cyberbullying?)

**Teacher A – Principal**

**School A – All female Grammar school**

**Teacher B – Head of Pastoral Care**

**School B – Mixed Comprehensive school**

**Teacher C – ICT Coordinator**

**School C – All female Comprehensive school**

**Teacher D – Form Teacher**

*The negative implications of cyberbullying on a post-primary pupil*

Every participant who was interviewed agreed that cyberbullying is a serious issue with serious implications for the well-being of a child. Teacher A, in School A, revealed that the issue of cyberbullying is not just confined within the walls of the school environment. Teacher B in School B agreed with this point and highlighted how a child can feel unsafe and unprotected, even at home, where also cyberbullying manifests. Teacher D of School C also emphasised the easiness of cyberbullying; it only takes a mobile phone or computer device to carry out this technological act of victimisation. This statement is also supported by O'Moore (2012), as discussed previously in the literature review. All teachers in Schools A and B commented on the issues of self-harm and suicide. They all believed them to be extreme consequences which are becoming more and more prevalent in contemporary society. However, in an interesting contrast, Teacher D in School C disagreed and stated "they are not consequences of cyberbullying; rather, they are consequences of severe physical bullying."

Moreover, all teachers agreed that cyberbullying has a negative, adverse effect on the relationships of the victim. Friendship circles and family relationships are severely damaged as are the professional relationships between pupils and teachers. Teacher B of School B indicated that, because of this, the victim feels isolated, lonely and helpless both at home and in school.

All teachers, again, agreed fundamentally on another particular effect of cyberbullying on a child; their quality of work and engagement in class lessened. In the *Anti-Bullying Policy* of Schools A and B, there is a clear indication given which states that victims of any form of bullying tend to demonstrate a decline in results. This was an interesting finding as it was not evident in the review of literature. Another aspect, which was not explicitly stated in the review of literature, was the teacher as a victim. Teachers A and C of School C described anecdotally a time when inappropriate comments were published over social media about a member of staff within the school. They both commented on how it was dealt with and also how regulations for staff members now feature in the *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Acceptable Use of Internet Policy* within the school. Something which was found in the literature which was not discussed during any interview was the area of drugs and alcohol abuse.

*Barriers schools face when addressing the issue of cyberbullying*

Teacher C in all schools agreed that a major problem schools face when trying to resolve cyberbullying is the restrictive networking system. In Northern Ireland and England, school systems are operated and monitored by C2K. Internet access is extremely limited; social networking sites are blocked for teachers too, and thus the monitoring of online taunting proves to be difficult. Teacher C in School B stated that obtaining evidence can almost prove impossible. Teacher A of School A did, however, explain that this was a necessary protocol which is explicitly outlined in their *Acceptable use of ICT and Internet Policy*. They stated "for the protection of both pupils and staff, social networking sites are blocked and will remain blocked for the foreseeable future". However, in contrast to this, Teacher B of School C revealed that this is actually a limitation which causes a restriction to teachers in schools when trying to resolve the issue. Teacher A of School B stated, too, that as most cyberbullying instances happen at home and "some parents believe it is not the school's responsibility to get involved". Teacher A in School A did, however, highlight that most parents will happily help the school in resolving the issue. They also stated it is usually the parents/guardians of the bully who tend to be uncooperative.

The schools' networking system was another aspect that was not apparent when reviewing literature. The issue of parental involvement did, however, come to the forefront when tackling the issue outside of school; this was also supported by Purdy and Mc Guckin (2013).

*School strategies used to combat cyberbullying*

All schools heavily publicised the negativity of bullying through the use of wall displays within the classroom, the emphasis on the anti-bullying week and the integration of an awareness of cyber safety through the curriculum. Teacher B in School B commented on the inclusion of anti-bullying lessons for PDMU and Personal Development lessons. Teacher A of School B reiterated this point and discussed it further in relation to the introduction of Peer Mentors / CHIPS buddies within the classroom. With the younger children in the Post-Primary school having a designated mentor within the classroom during form time, cyberbullying, along with other forms of bullying, began reduced because of their presence. Moreover, in every school's ICT policy, students sign a declaration at the beginning of the year about the acceptable use of ICT and the Internet within the classroom. The consequences of foul-play online and cyberbullying were explicitly stated, and pupils were even made aware of the involvement of the Police, should an issue become severe. This was also supported by the NI Anti-Bullying Forum (2011) in the review of literature.

An interesting question, which did not become evident in the review of literature, was the policy on mobile phones in schools. In School A's *Anti-Bullying Policy*, it states that mobile phones should not be brought to school. However, if they are brought into school by accident, they are to be turned off and set on top of the table whenever the pupil comes into a classroom. For the Year 13 and 14 students at this school, "mobile phones are allowed as they are a privilege; they should only be turned on during break and lunch time and photographs should not be taken". In an interesting contrast, Schools B and C do, however, take a very different approach. In their *Anti-Bullying policies* and *Acceptable Use of ICT and Internet policies*, mobiles phones are forbidden in school. If a child is seen with a mobile phone in the classroom, it will be immediately confiscated, and a parent will have to collect it at the end of the school day. Teacher A of School B further explained that a pupil will be suspended if this was to become a recurring issue. Even though it is evident here that there are different rules on mobile phones, it is still a factor which is not explicitly addressed in the current literature.

*Whole-school strategies to address cyberbullying*

School C during an Enrichment Programme dedicated a full day on sessions relating to cyber safety which were delivered by both pupils and teachers. The dangers of cyberbullying were illustrated through role-play, videos and personal anecdotes. Teachers A and B of School C stated that this strategy proved to be successful in the school because of the reduction in cyberbullying issues since they began doing it three years ago. This approach was also supported by the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (2011, a) and Media Awareness Network (2006) in the review of literature. All schools seemed to be acutely aware of the issue of cyberbullying and made sure that pupils were regularly informed of the consequences should it happen. This was indicative from reading their *Anti-Bullying Policies* and *Acceptable Use of ICT and Internet policies*. All policies stated how the use of ICT and the Internet in school was a privilege which could be confiscated if it was misused. Teacher C in all schools stressed that "all internet activity is monitored and pupils clearly know what the boundaries are when online; this is clearly explained to them during the signing of their Use of ICT in School declaration". This highlighted the strong emphasis the school placed on internet safety.

In School A and B's *Anti-Bullying Policy*, a "no blame" approach is adopted; both parties come together, along with friends, in the form of peer mediation, to come to an agreed understanding. School C also, in their *Anti-Bullying Policy*, stressed the importance of school assemblies which are themed around the issue of cyber safety and "being SMART online". Pupils are told about their future careers being in jeopardy should they act foolishly online. Teacher D in School C highlighted that these particular statements encouraged discussion from pupils. This, again, was another issue which was not apparent in the literature, yet was highlighted by all schools. Teacher B of School B



commented that “teachers need to be more technologically aware too in order to deal with the issue of cyberbullying”. Purdy and Mc Guckin (2011) support this idea and encourage staff development days in order for teachers to be more aware of social networking and other technological advances. Teacher B in all three schools did agree, too, that a school’s ICT Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy needs to be regularly updated to cater for these new social media applications and computer devices. This particular point has enhanced my own classroom practice; I now realise that one should never assume information in relation to policy.

### Conclusion

This small-scale study has highlighted that cyberbullying is very much a serious issue which continues to occur in schools. In the post-primary school especially, cyberbullying has negative implications on the well-being of a child. From the review of literature, and the results from research in the various schools, it is clear that the issue of cyberbullying is being dealt with in a pro-active, child-centred way with a very pastoral approach. All schools clearly had pupils’ wellbeing at heart, and this was evident through their classroom and whole-school strategies in dealing with cyberbullying.

#### *Were the research questions answered? What were the main findings?*

The first research question asked about the negative implications of cyberbullying on post-primary pupils. From the literature review and findings in school, it was evident that there are many adverse effects in which a child can experience through cyberbullying. Children can feel depressed, which can lead to self-harm, and in the worst case, suicide. In terms of school, pupils’ work can deteriorate and relationships with teachers and peers could suffer too. Furthermore, a child’s brain development could also be at risk due to unnecessary and excessive stress caused by constant worrying. It also became apparent that cyberbullying can happen anywhere at any time; a person only needs access to a mobile phone or computer to begin the victimising process. The literature review did, however, outline the advantages of technology, when used in the correct way, for teaching and learning in schools. Schools are becoming more technologically advanced now and this is evident through their increasing use of iPads.

The second research question sought to identify the various strategies schools could implement to address the issue of cyberbullying. Literature provided two approaches: classroom strategies and whole-school strategies. Strategies used in the classroom ranged from anti-bullying wall displays, anti-bullying and cyber safety lessons and the introduction of a peer mentor who was a support mechanism within the room for young children. Teachers were able to analyse these measures which were in place and assess their success. In terms of whole-school strategies, it was extremely evident that the schools’ policies were the cornerstone for a school to be successfully able to deal with the issue of cyberbullying. Research showed that the schools involved were acutely aware of the various issues which give rise to cyberbullying. They were able to provide a list of ways, from a whole-school perspective, on how they would deal with them; this was indicative through the document analysis of their policies. There was a great emphasis placed on internet and ICT etiquette, and the consequences should this ICT/Internet privilege be misused. It was interesting, too, to see the different approaches schools were using when dealing with parental involvement and the use of mobile phones in schools. In one school, the use of mobile phones at certain times was a privilege for the sixth form pupils, yet in other schools they were forbidden.

There were certain **limitations** for this study such as lack of time and lack of direct pupil involvement. There also could have been more research and insight obtained should the study have been carried out in a single-sex male school also.

From the research in schools and review of literature, it is clear that there are still strategies which could be implemented and improvements which could be made by schools. It has been suggested

that teachers do need more training in relation to social media. School policies, in relation to ICT and Bullying, also need to be regularly updated to demonstrate an awareness of advances in technology. I also believe that more research could be done on the issue of cyberbullying in schools as over the last two years more applications have been introduced, such as Snapchat, which have not been investigated, but are being used by most post-primary pupils. Most schools now are using social networking as a means of communication to parents and pupils. Therefore, more research could also be done to assess the effectiveness of this approach and its credibility. Finally, I also believe that this small-scale study has shown that cyberbullying could be defined in greater detail to address technological advances; the current definitions are old and fail to include the aspect of social media websites. Cyberbullying is clearly a major issue in Ireland's schools and schools in England. From this study I have gained an experiential insight and a professional awareness of how it should be addressed. From the interviews and literature review, it is apparent how there are still aspects which need further consideration, such as the link between cyberbullying and substance abuse. However, this study has ultimately shown that there are schools working very tenaciously to address this issue as they genuinely have a strong emphasis on pupil safety and well-being.

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