



Focus

- To read and discuss the poem 'Under attack!' and develop an understanding of cyberbullying

Teacher information

- Cyberbullying is the act of bullying a target using technology such as mobile phones or the internet as a vehicle.
- In the 'real world' there are generally physical boundaries where the bullying stops; for example, at home or in the classroom (with the teacher present). However, cyberspace knows no boundaries and a target has no reprieve or safe haven from his or her tormentor.
- Cyberbullying includes repeated attacks, threats, defamation or harassment designed to cause distress to the intended target. The bully or group of bullies may use mobile phone messages or pictures; internet social sites or blogs; or email to render the torment. They may stage the same attack over and over, or vary the delivery. It may be organised by one bully and carried out by several others or it may be organised and carried out by the same person.
- Cyberspace provides the bully with a sense of anonymity which he or she doesn't have in the 'real world'. It allows the bully to take the bullying to another level beyond what is possible at school or other 'traditional bullying hotspots'. It also provides the target with a hard copy of the event(s) which he/she is able to read and reread many times over—causing much deeper harm.

Introduction

- The poem was written from the point of view of a schoolgirl who is experiencing cyberbullying. It demonstrates that mobile phones and the internet are used as a vehicle for this type of bullying, which then removes all traditional boundaries.

Discussing the text

- Why do you think Debra compares the spreading of rumours and lies by mobile phone, to the spreading of a bushfire? (Modern technology allows the spreading of information more rapidly than by any other means, just as a bushfire spreads rapidly.)
- Debra refers to her room as a place where she 'once' felt safe. Explain why she doesn't feel safe there any longer. (The use of mobile phones and the internet means that her bullies can target her wherever she is; therefore, she can even be bullied at home, in her bedroom.)
- What impact is this cyberbullying having on Debra? (She feels threatened everywhere she turns, her self-esteem has taken a beating and she feels powerless to make it stop.)
- What exactly is cyberbullying? (The use of mobile phones, the internet or other technology to bully another person.)

Answers

1. (a) 'Gloom' means darkness or dimness. Debra feels the attacks are taking the light and joy out of her life.
(b) Debra is being cyberbullied.
(c) Debra no longer feels safe anywhere.
(d) She is losing confidence in herself. She feels weak and powerless.
2. Cyberbullying is the act of bullying a target using technology such as mobile phones or the internet as a vehicle.
3. Pupils would hopefully suggest to tell an adult, get help and block the bullies. Teacher check

Supporting activities

- Review the information provided at:
<<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetail/Kids.aspx?topic=5&np=288&id=2704>>
- Invite pupils to share their own experiences.

READ ABOUT IT

Under attack!

Under attack at school and at home
 my one-time friends use their mobile phone
 to torment, to hurt, to spread rumours and lies
 as quickly and easily as wild bushfires.

At home, where I once felt safe in my room
 their chat room assaults fill my heart with gloom.
 Reading them over and over hurts even more.
 Their resounding attacks are hard to ignore.

Now, with nowhere to go and nowhere to hide
 I feel myself slowly shrinking inside.
 What can I do to make it all cease
 and once again have my mind at peace?

— Debra



WRITE ABOUT IT

1. Discuss and record your thoughts about each of these.

(a) Find the meaning of 'gloom' and explain why you think Debra used this word in her poem.

(b) What exactly is happening to Debra?

(c) Where does Debra feel safe?

(d) What do you think Debra means when she says: 'I feel myself slowly shrinking inside'?

MORE ABOUT IT

2. Use the information you gained from the poem to write a definition of 'cyberbullying'.

3. Discuss and share what Debra could do to: 'make it all cease and once again have my mind at peace.'