

## Beatbullying Study: Virtual Violence II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying (Teachers)

### Aims

Beatbullying's second large-scale research study of cyberbullying among 11-16-year-olds in the UK aimed to explore the phenomenon of cyberbullying two years on from the first study, *Virtual Violence: Protecting Children from Cyberbullying*. This Research Highlight summarises the results of the study as they relate to teachers' experiences of cyberbullying.

### Key Findings

- 1 in 10 teachers reported being harassed electronically, and 48% witnessed it happening to a colleague.
- The vast majority of known perpetrators were pupils at their school (73%), while parents were responsible in 11% of cases and other teachers, ex-pupils or pupils from another school accounted for 10%.
- The effects of cyberbullying are severe for teachers: 15% felt afraid for their safety or that of their families as a result of the cyberbullying or harassment, 9% felt mentally or emotionally violated and 6% said that they lost confidence or competence and their teaching suffered as a result. 3% contemplated leaving the profession and 3% resigned altogether.
- The most common action taken by teachers in response to cyberbullying against them by pupils was some form of in-school sanctions against the aggressor. This included detention, which was used in 56% of cases and stopped the behaviour in 78% of cases. Informing the parents of those involved was a less common choice (21%), and was successful in 58% of cases.
- Avoiding or deregistering from the platforms where the harassment was taking place worked 57% of the time, closely followed by spending less time online (56%). Talking directly with the pupils involved was the action taken in just over a quarter (26%) of cases, with success reported in half of them.
- 38% of teachers also felt that websites should be doing more for the safety of their service users. A third (33%) called for more education and training for teachers, a third (32%) called for more education among parents, and a quarter (25%) called for more education among pupils.

## Policy Context

Policies responding to cyberbullying need to be informed by a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the situation. *Virtual Violence II* and its precursor *Virtual Violence* provide an in-depth quantitative and qualitative overview of cyberbullying: prevalence, intensity, methods, motivations, platforms, responses, effects and consequences and recommendations for change. This evidence helps to inform responses and target interventions.

## Methodology

A comprehensive survey of teaching professionals was undertaken measuring levels of cyberbullying against pupils within a school, prevalence of harassment against teachers, and effective support strategies available for both pupils and teachers. The survey was completed online between September and December 2011 by 339 teaching professionals from across the UK. The survey was implemented in close collaboration with the NAHT.

## Background

The research for *Virtual Violence II: Progress and Challenges in the Fight against Cyberbullying* was intended both to stand alone and as a comparison with the first study, tracking changes in the 'landscape' of cyberbullying in the context of increased publicity, attempts at education and prevention and the increasing availability of communications technology in the last few years. It was commissioned by Nominet Trust and researched in association with the National Association for Head Teachers (NAHT).

**Source** <http://www.beatbullying.org/pdfs/Virtual-Violence-II.pdf> (published February 2012)

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