Handling Cyberbullying at School: Prevention, Intervention, and Follow-up

A whole-school approach

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Facts about Cyberbullying

➢ 3 in 4 teenagers reported that they had been cyber-bullied. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VpsLjpwouo)

➢ 88% victims do not take any action, and 83% won't do anything if the victim is their friend. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VpsLjpwouo)

➢ Almost 2 in 3 of those bullied become bullies themselves (Monks, Robinson, & Worlidge, 2012).

➢ Most children being bullied online won't alert adults.

➢Students do not know how to keep themselves safe in cyberspace. Of those who did know some strategies, only 15.4% said they had learned them at school (Yilmaz, 2011).

➢ Meta-analyses showed that programs included a whole-school anti-bullying policy were most effective in reducing bullying behavior and victimization (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2015).

A prevalent problem in Hong Kong adolescents

Severe negative consequences

Anti-cyberbullying based on a whole-school approach is needed

What is a whole school approach?

A whole-school approach (Cambridge Education, 2005) means **that the whole school community, including the students, teachers, support staff (counsellors, social workers); parents and board of governors, are involved in confronting the issue of cyberbullying.** This is the most effective approach to tackling bullying and cyberbullying in school.

School administrators	Teachers and other school faculty	Students	Parents
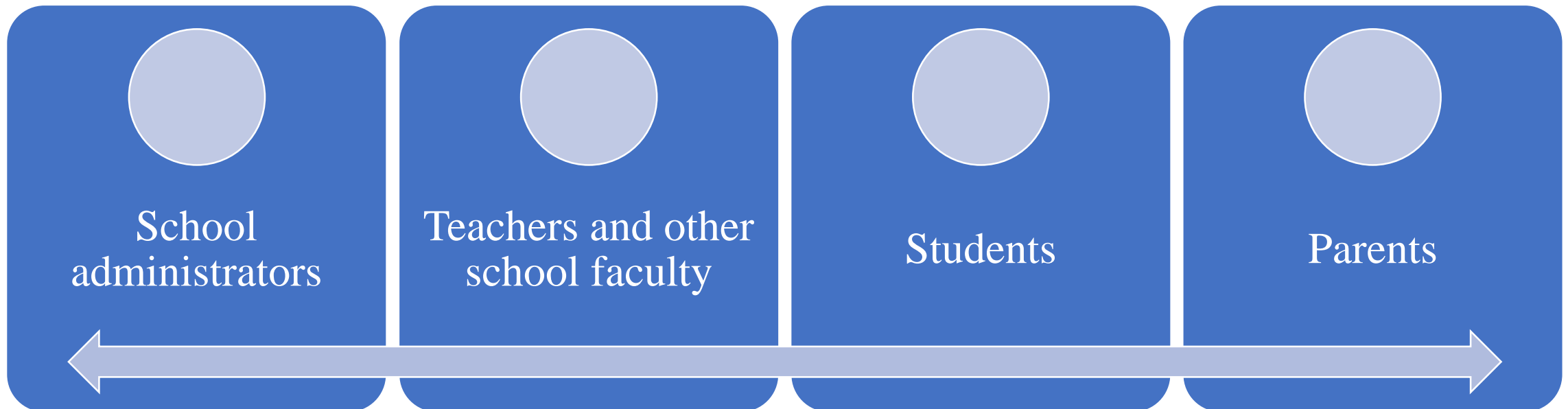
(Pearce et al., 2011)

Prevention

School Policy   (The Anti-Defamation League, 2007)
- ❏ Defining clear guidelines for Internet use
- ❏ Updating policies to include consequences for cyberbullying and online cruelty
- ❏ Establish reporting mechanisms, and make reporting of cyberbullying and online hate incidents a requirement

Empower Teachers and School Faculty
- ❏ Provide education and training for teachers and school faculty regarding the knowledge about Internet safety, awareness, and strategies of cyberbullying (Tangen & Campbell, 2010).
- ❏ Resources for school social worker

Prevention

Students Education

❑ Digital literacy: e-safety, netiquette, assessing one's online risk, measures to protect oneself online.

❑ Knowledge and awareness of cyberbullying and strategies for reacting to cyberbullying as targets and as bystanders

❑ Promote empathy, ethical decision-making skills, and respect among students

Parents Education

❑ Increase awareness of Internet safety strategies among parents

❑ Encourage parents to monitor their children's Internet use, teach parents social media use, and signs of cyberbullying

(The Anti-Defamation League, 2007; Grigg, 2010; Marczak & Coyne, 2010; Marczak, 2012)

Prevention

Anti-Cyberbullying School Culture

❑ Reframing bully prevention to build strong school community
❑ Develop value of respect and social-emotional skills

(The Anti-Defamation League, 2007; Grigg, 2010; Marczak & Coyne, 2010; Marczak, 2012)

Intervention

1. Early identification

2. Immediate response

3. Assessing the problem

4. Reactive strategies

5. Counseling

Be aware of warning signs of cyberbullying

(The Anti-Defamation League, 2007)

Signs of Cyberbullying

Can you think of any warning signs that may indicate that your student is a victim of cyberbullying?

Can you think of any warning signs that may indicate that your student is a perpetrator of cyberbullying?

Warning signs of cyberbullying **perpetrators**

- ➤ Hides or closes computer screen from others
- ➤ Uses computer late at night
- ➤ Becomes agitated if they cannot use the computer
- ➤ Suddenly stops using computer or noticeable, rapid decreases in devise use including texting
- ➤ Displays excessive laughter while using computer
- ➤ Does not discuss what he or she is doing on the computer

<u>Warning signs</u> of cyberbullying **victims**

➤ Shows anxiety when email or instant messages appear on the computer/mobile phone screen

➤ Appears upset or depressed after using computer/mobile phone

➤ Suddenly stops using computer or noticeable, rapid decreases/increase in devise use including texting

➤ Appears anxious about/avoid going out in public including school, even those that were enjoyed in the past.

➤ Tries not to engage in conversations about what he or she is doing on the computer

➤ Becomes withdrawn from social and family support systems

Intervention

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1. Early identification

2. Immediate response

Listen and talk to the student

Step 1: Be a good listener
- Take your student seriously
- Find a private place that makes student feel safe
- Manage your own feeling well
- Be the role model for your student during the conversation

Step 2: Talk with your student about the problem
- Give your student unconditional support
- Use gentle exploration and empathy
- Save evidence

Intervention

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1. Early identification

2. Immediate response

3. Assessing the problem

Investigate and assess the problem

1. Assess if the problem belongs to bullying behaviour
2. Help student to understand the difference between rude, mean, and bullying behaviours
3. Thoroughly investigate the incident: fully understand the situation, and have separate conversations with all parties
4. Determine the consequences in accordance with school policies
5. Consult with other school staff about what to do next on reporting and handling the incident

Intervention

1. **Early identification**

2. **Immediate response**

3. **Assessing the problem**

4. **Reactive strategies**

Take actions according to school policies

- Specific intervention: give the student advice for making sure the bullying does not happen again.

- No retaliation: ensure that the young person does not retaliate or reply to the messages.

- Privacy: encourage the child to keep personal information private on the internet.

- Work with parents and other parties (e.g., police).

Specific intervention

➢Blocking offending e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers

➢Changing children's e-mail address and cell phone numbers

➢Reporting cyberbullying incidents to police if extremely harmful

➢Reporting incidents to e-mail services, internet service providers, web sites, cell phone companies, etc.

➢Cancelling services if providers do not respond to complaints

Intervention

1. Early identification

2. Immediate response

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5. Counseling

Profiles of cyberbullying victims

Victims (last 3 months)

1. Lower self-esteem

2. Feel lonely

3. Perceived difficulties in emotions, concentrations, behaviour, or getting along with other people

4. Physical symptoms: headache, recurrent abdominal pain, sleeping difficulties

5. Not feeling safe at school

6. Mental health problems: depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, self-harm, etc.

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009)

Intervention: the victims

Counselling for cyber-victims

- Help the child to cope with the trauma of cyberbullying
- Deal with the physical and mental difficulties caused by cyberbullying
- Assertive skills
- Socialization skills
- Improving self-concept
- Assess for underlying issues that may lead to bullying behaviours
- **Provide education to parents on how to support their child**

(John et al., 2018)

The cyberbullies?

Cyberbullying has an anonymous nature, and cyberbullies:

- are easily able to hide behind and often undetected

- do not receive tangible feedback

- are unable to recognize the harm they cause and lack remorse

Profile of Cyberbullying perpetrators (past 3 months)

1. More often victims and bystanders of cyberbullying

2. More often **perpetrators of traditional bullying**

Cyberbullies also need intervention.

3. Perceived difficulties in emotions, concentrations, behaviour, or getting along with other people

4. Hyperactivity, conduct problem, infrequent helping behaviour, frequently smoking or getting drunk, headache

5. Not feeling safe at school

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009)

Intervention: the cyberbullies

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➤ Give your student **support**: let them know **you will listen** to them; reassure them that you will help them try to resolve the problem

➤ Find out what happened

➤ Communicate your school's values and policy

➤ Create a plan with the student to take responsible action, following school policy

| Counselling	• Assess for underlying issues that may have lead to bullying behaviours
For Cyber-	• Deal with the underlying issues including experiences of being victimized
Bullies	• Educate the child regarding the serious consequences of cyberbullying
	• Increasing self esteem
	• Improve social skills
	• Impulse control, anger management, ways to appropriately express feelings

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Williard, 2004)

Follow up

> **Follow up with your student**: to ensure they are safe, and feel safe in your classroom

1. Has the problem been resolved?
2. Does the student feel comfortable in your classroom and at school?
3. Has the child who engaged in bullying behaviour received education and support?
4. Are the students involved in the incident in need of mental health support or services?
5. Does your student have a support network of friends and family?
6. Have you developed norms around acceptable behaviours in your classroom and in the school community?
7. Are you teaching direct lessons on social and emotional learning?

> **Follow up with parents of the student**: to ensure communications were clear and the consistency regarding what to do to encourage the most positive outcome.
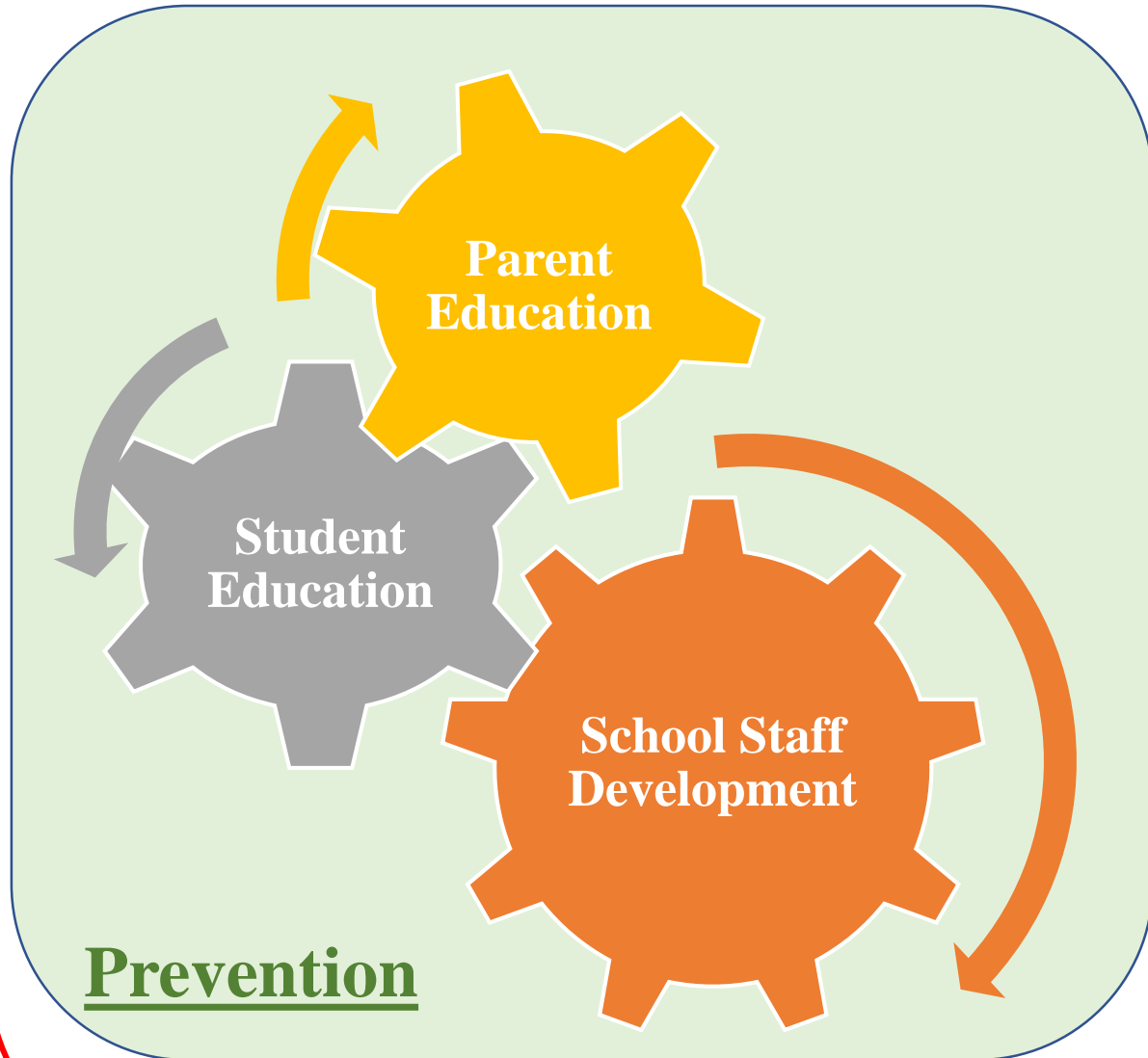
(John et al., 2018)

What do successful antibullying programs have in common?
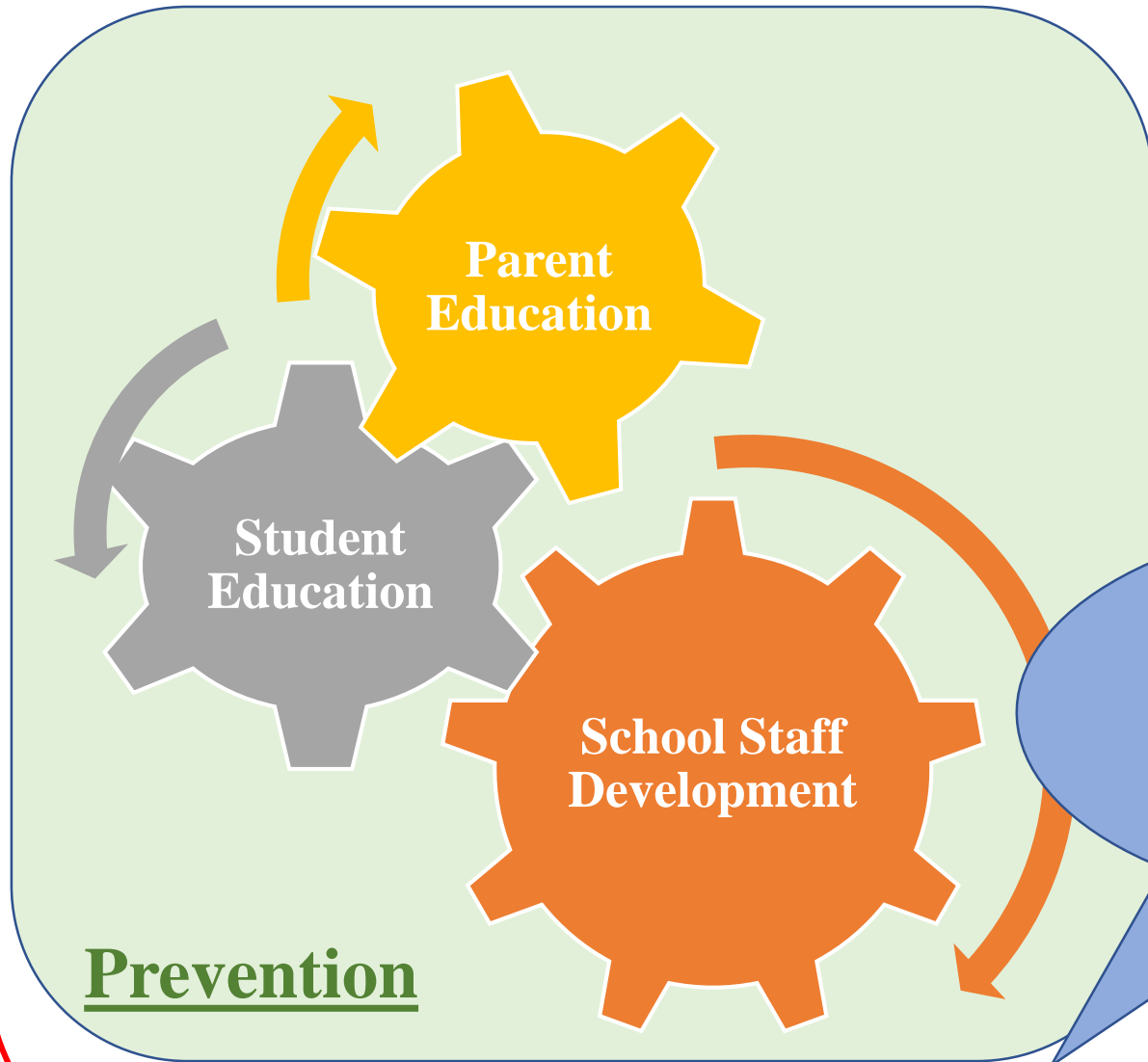
MY SCHOOL POLICY: WHAT CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

MY SCHOOL POLICY: WHAT CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

Please spend 1-2 minutes to recall **the available resources and/or policy in your school** as far as you know, **related to the challenges of technology / cyberbullying**. What are the strengths and gaps in these resources?

Work with your group, choose one question in **Handout 1** for discussion and write down your answers in the worksheet.

Choose one improvement that you want to make and develop an action plan in **Handout 2**.

Useful Resources

- **Making Your Primary School E-safe: Whole School Cyberbullying and E-safety Strategies for Meeting Ofsted Requirements** Kindle Edition

Useful Resources

- Facebook has produced Empowering Educators support sheet specifically for teachers and launched the Bullying Prevention Hub with Yale's Centre for Emotional Intelligence.

Useful Resources

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/

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