



TROLLING

ADVICE
FOR
PARENTS

Sefton Council



What is Trolling?

- A troll is a person who will make an inflammatory comment in order to provoke an emotional response; trolling is sometimes referred to as “baiting”.
- Trolling can happen in online forums, message boards, chat rooms, and on social networks and micro blogging sites, as well as personal emails. Trolls may exist in any online community that allows comments from users - for example, video streaming sites, such as YouTube and online video games sites.
- Trolls can act individually or in groups - known as "colluding" trolls. One member of such a group often behaves as the obvious troll, while the others disguise themselves as normal members of the online community. These trolls in disguise then defend the comments of the overt one.
- Trolls may also target the recently bereaved, posting offensive material about the dead person.

How to prevent Trolling:

Encourage your child to KEEP PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVATE –

- Ensure they understand not to post private information about themselves or their friends online or on their profile that can be used by trolls to attack them.
- Make sure your child understands that they should never post or share their personal information online (including full name, address, telephone number, school name, parents' names, credit card number, or Social Security number) or their friends' personal information.
- Make sure your child understands how to set security and privacy settings.
- Relocate all computers into the family living area – that way you can carefully monitor any unusual activity.
- Make sure your children are careful about who they are talking to and remind them they should only accept real friends as online friends.
- Encourage your child not to talk to people online who they do not know in real life.

- Remind your child never to reveal their location. This includes telling them not to tag themselves at a place when they are out and about as this tells the troll exactly where they are.

Tips for dealing with Trolling:

As a Parent/Carer

- Encourage your child to make a note when they have been trolled, detailing the date and time.
- Encourage your child to collect all emails sent by someone who you believe is trolling them. It is important to keep a record of any communication that they receive from trolls so that you can use it as evidence with the authorities, such as the Police. Report the trolls to the site, the Police, and Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP).
- Encourage your child to keep any text messages from trolls on their phone – again useful for evidence building.
- Encourage your child to take screen grabs of any nasty messages posted on forums or chat rooms and save them as evidence (or take a picture of the screen with the camera in your phone if you have one).

- **Do Not Overreact** - Trolling can often easily be dealt with by reporting the offending individual. If you attempt to take away Internet or social networking access from your child it is likely they will not confide in you in the future.

- **Do Not Respond** – Even though it may be tempting to respond to the troll on behalf of your child, the best advice is not to do this as it will only make matters worse. Trolls feed off responses and view them as a victory.

- **Be Sympathetic** - Abuse online can be as traumatic for children and teenagers as bullying in real life and can often be worse since it is anonymous and can happen at any time of day.

- **Block Trolls** - Most social networking sites have a 'report' function to alert them to anti-social behaviour, and enable users to 'block' others. Look for 'help' under the settings menu.

Trolling can affect your child's mental and physical health, so it's important to understand how a troll operates and what you can do to beat them.

Remember there is Legal protection against trolling

In Britain, section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 says it's an offence to send grossly offensive messages, or messages of an indecent, obscene or menacing character, and people have been imprisoned for this.

LOCAL HELP AND SUPPORT

Sefton Attendance and Welfare Service

Telephone: **0151 934 3359**

Welfare.Officers@sefton.gov.uk

Bullybusters

BullyBusters is an anti-bullying initiative with a free phone confidential helpline for children and young people and their families.

Free Merseyside based confidential helpline: **0800 169 6928**

www.bullybusters.org.uk



USEFUL CONTACTS

Childline

Free confidential helpline for children, young people and their families.

The website contains information, advice and publications on the subject of bullying.

Helpline: **0800 11 11** (24 hours)

www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape

Kidscape is a UK charity set up specifically to prevent bullying and child abuse, providing information, resources and practical skills to help keep children safe from harm.

Helpline: **08451 205 204**

www.kidscape.org.uk

NATIONAL WEBSITES

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

The CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) website offers a wealth of up-to-date, practical information on how to keep your child safe online, including where to go for further help and advice.

www.childnet.com

Includes 'Know IT All' resources on the safe and positive use of the Internet.

www.saferinternet.org.uk

Offers the latest advice on how to use the Internet and new technologies safely and responsibly.

www.sefton.gov.uk/schools