



THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

The Cybersmile Foundation and Instagram Announce ‘Banter or Bullying? No Offence’ Report and Campaign Focused on Offence and Personal Boundaries

London, UK, November 16th, 2020 - The Cybersmile Foundation and Instagram have announced the launch of a brand-new report and creative campaign to mark Anti-Bullying Week. The *Banter or Bullying? No Offence* report published today, examines the nature of offence and where young people draw the line in 2020. In light of the findings of the report, Cybersmile and Instagram have also launched a joint creative campaign to raise awareness of bullying masked as banter and to encourage young people to identify and manage their own personal boundaries.

“We are all spending a huge amount of time online in 2020 and, therefore conversations about digital wellbeing and cyberbullying are more important than ever. Understanding peoples tone online can be challenging, and not everyone has the confidence to speak out when they are offended, so it’s important that people of all ages build the necessary skills to protect their online life and reach out for support when they need it.”

Dr Radha Modgil, Doctor and TV Presenter

The report is based on a poll of 3,003 13-18 year-olds from across the U.K. designed to better understand young people’s personal boundaries, the use of primers such as ‘no offence but...’ and teenager’s ability to identify bullying masked as banter. The poll also explored how young people feel about communicating openly with friends and family when lines become crossed and personal boundaries breached

“With an increase in time spent online this year, we have continued to build and expand our suite of anti-bullying tools to help people establish their personal boundaries online and stop hurtful comments before they happen. This Anti-Bullying Week we’d encourage parents and teens to check out these tools alongside our partner Cybersmile’s advice on how to discuss your personal boundaries with others.”

Kira Wong O’Conner, EMEA Policy Programmes Manager, Instagram

The Cybersmile and Instagram creative campaign will last the duration of Anti-Bullying Week and include contributions from entertainer Chunkz, Cybersmile ambassadors Holly H and Chessie King as well as doctor and TV presenter Dr. Radha Modgil. The *Banter or Bullying? No Offence* campaign will call out bullying and encourage young people to set personal boundaries online.

“I have been standing up to bullies since I was in school, but sometimes it’s not always that clear cut. Banter with your mates can turn bad, and if not everyone is laughing, then it’s time to stop and think about who could be hurting. Talking openly and honestly with friends about what crosses the line for you is the best first step to getting the banter back on track.”

Chunkz, Entertainer

Instagram and Cybersmile are committed to leading the fight against online bullying. Instagram recently announced updates to its suite of anti-bullying tools to include an expansion of the Comment Warning feature, which warns people when they repeatedly try to post potentially offensive comments, and a new AI tool which automatically hides comments similar to those frequently reported for bullying. For more information about Instagram’s safety tools visit about.instagram.com.

“This research demonstrates that a majority of young people are aware of their own personal boundaries and how subtle nuances in conversation can be used to disguise bullying or affect the way that communication is perceived. We believe it is vital to educate and encourage young people to make use of the features and tools available to them to control their online experience and maintain their digital wellbeing.”

Dan Raisbeck, Co-founder, The Cybersmile Foundation

In addition to the report and creative aspects of the campaign, Cybersmile and Instagram have also launched a series of interactive educational modules titled ‘Using Instagram’s Safety Tools,’ ‘Getting the most from Instagram’ and ‘Dealing with Bullying on Instagram,’ all designed to help people get the most from Instagram and educate them on the best way to make use of the safety tools available to them.

“I love sharing my life online, and getting to speak to so many great people from across the world. But there are times when people post or comment hurtful things and it can be tough to know how to deal with that. Everyone should have the freedom to be themselves online, so if you ever find yourself dealing with negativity, talk to your friends or family about it or reach out to an organization like Cybersmile for advice – never be afraid to ask for support!”

Holly H, Cybersmile Ambassador

ABOUT THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

The Cybersmile Foundation is a multi-award-winning non-profit organisation committed to digital wellbeing and tackling all forms of bullying and abuse online. They work to promote kindness, diversity and inclusion by building a safer, more positive digital community and encouraging people to realise their full potential without the fear of ridicule and abuse.

Through education and the promotion of positive digital citizenship, The Cybersmile Foundation reduces incidents of cyberbullying and provides professional help and support services to children and adults around the world.

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