



Unkind Actions & the Law

Although cyberbullying is not an offence, behaviours and actions linked to bullying can be an offence. A person can be charged with a crime from 10 years old, so it is important you know the law when you send, post or share something online.

An Act is a law. Looking at the four Acts below and the examples of reports made to police, link the Act you think the police will most likely use to investigate the offences within each of the reports.

Communications Act

It is an offence to use any digital device to send or post mean, upsetting, offensive or degrading words to someone.

Malicious Communications Act

It is an offence to send any form of communication to cause the person receiving it to feel upset, offended or anxious; includes threats and information which the sender knows is not true.

Protection from Harassment Act

It is an offence to carry out any act or behaviour that you know would make another person feel upset, harassed or distressed.

S.4 covers threats and causing a person to feel in fear of violence (on more than 2 occasions).

Computer Misuse Act

It is an offence to hack into a person's online account, or personal device, to purposely use their information to do something to make that person feel upset, embarrassed, harassed or distressed.

Common Police Reports

"Someone has created a fake Facebook account in my name using my photos and information – they are posting things that are really upsetting and not true".

"I have been sent a message from a boy I know threatening to tell my friend, their family and everyone that I stole their bike even though he knows I didn't; he said he wants to see me get bullied and beaten up and that he might do it himself or get his brother to – I am scared I'm going to get hurt for something I didn't do and everyone will believe his story"

"Someone I know is sending me lots of text messages threatening to beat me up when they see me, I have asked them to leave me alone but they won't – I feel too scared to go out, I don't know what else to do".

My best friend has turned against me and posted personal pictures and information I had shared with them – they've put everything on their social media accounts without asking me to embarrass me. Everyone is laughing and commenting, I am so upset, this is the worst thing ever"

"A girl I know has been posting things about me on social media, calling me names and accusing me of doing things I haven't done – she is making other people like and share her comments, I feel people are ganging up on me".