

Teachers cyber-bullied by students and parents

27th April, 2014



Children as young as seven are posting abusive and damaging comments about their teachers on social networking websites such as

Facebook and Twitter, according to new research. Even worse, some of the children's parents are adding their comments to what constitutes a serious escalation in the cyber-bullying of educators. The British teaching union NASUWT conducted a survey of more than 7,500 teachers. It found that almost half of teachers had reported abuse to the school, police or the website on which the insults were posted. Other figures show that more than 20 per cent of teachers felt they had been cyber-bullied in the past year. Three per cent of the comments were from under-elevens.

The survey revealed that 64% of the comments were made by pupils, 27% by parents, and the rest a mix of both. Many of the comments related to teachers' appearance, competence, and sexuality. Chris Keates, NASUWT general secretary, said: "It is clear that steps need to be taken to protect teachers from the abuse of social media by pupils and parents." She added: "Teachers are often devastated by the vile nature of the abuse they are suffering. Some have lost their confidence to teach once they see foul and personal remarks made by pupils in their classes and have left the profession." Many teachers are afraid to report the abuse. They think it would lead to more trouble.

Sources: *Telegraph* / *SKY* / *TES.co.uk*

Writing

What are the pros and cons of being a teacher? Would you like to be one? Why?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

posting / abusive / research / educators / union / insults / figures / cyber-bullied / revealed / appearance / competence / sexuality / devastated / confidence / profession

True / False

- Most students posting abuse about teachers are seven years old. T / F
- The cyber-bullying of teachers is getting worse. T / F
- A teaching union surveyed 7,500 teachers about cyber-bullying. T / F
- A fifth of teachers reported being cyber-bullied in the past year. T / F
- Over a quarter of abusive comments came from parents. T / F
- A union leader said sufficient steps had been taken to protect teachers. T / F
- No teachers have quit their job over the cyber-bullying. T / F
- Teachers are showing no fear in reporting the abuse. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. abusive | a. combination |
| 2. constitutes | b. carried out |
| 3. escalation | c. statistics |
| 4. conducted | d. amounts to |
| 5. figures | e. nasty |
| 6. revealed | f. insulting |
| 7. mix | g. ability |
| 8. competence | h. upsurge |
| 9. vile | i. result in |
| 10. lead to | j. showed |

Discussion – Student A

- Should students be punished for abusive comments?
- How can teachers deal with damaging remarks about them?
- Should the police get involved in stopping this abuse?
- Should a teacher be able to sue students and parents for comments about them?
- What would you do if you found dozens of vile comments about you?
- Has social media given people too much power to hurt others?
- Are teachers treated well in your country?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the union?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. posting abusive and | a. been cyber-bullied |
| 2. a serious | b. under-elevens |
| 3. teaching | c. to protect teachers |
| 4. teachers felt they had | d. damaging comments |
| 5. 3% of the comments were from | e. nature of the abuse |
| 6. comments related to | f. to more trouble |
| 7. steps need to be taken | g. escalation |
| 8. devastated by the vile | h. confidence to teach |
| 9. Some have lost their | i. union |
| 10. They think it would lead | j. teachers' appearance |

Discussion – Student B

- What three adjectives best describe teachers and why?
- Who was your favourite teacher (and why)?
- What do you think of cyber-bullying?
- What things about teaching do you think are difficult?
- What do you think of 7-year-olds posting abusive comments about their teachers?
- Do all teachers do a good job?
- Should pupils and parents talk to teachers instead of using social media?
- Did you ever have any issues with your teachers?

Spelling

- posting eiusbav and damaging comments
- odcicrnag to research
- a serious tsiacoealn
- teaching noinu
- conducted a yrusev
- the suinlst were posted
- The survey edeavlre that 64%...
- teachers' appearance, eetmocpecn, and sexuality
- Teachers are often dtstavadee
- the lvei nature of the abuse
- fluo and personal remarks
- left the rposnfeo

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. h	4. b	5. c
6. j	7. a	8. g	9. e	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Energy

You think energy is the most important thing for a teacher to possess. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, a sense of humour or qualifications.

Role B – Intelligence

You think intelligence is the most important thing for a teacher to possess. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): energy, a sense of humour or qualifications.

Role C – A sense of humour

You think a sense of humour is the most important thing for a teacher to possess. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, energy or qualifications.

Role D – Qualifications

You think qualifications are the most important thing for a teacher to possess. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so important about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, a sense of humour or energy.

Speaking – Teachers

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important qualities a teacher should have at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • a sense of humour | • helps students outside class |
| • be thick-skinned | • knowledge of technology |
| • energy | • good class management |
| • talks to all students | • knows his/her subject |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.