

THE STRAITS TIMES

Pay heed to cyber bullying among youth

🕒 PUBLISHED SEP 25, 2015, 5:00 AM SGT

Cyber bullying is another form of bullying that is on the rise, given the growing use of the Internet and social media among children ("Don't let 'get tough on bullying' be mere slogan" by Mr Ng Qi Siang, and "Creating a bully-free school a responsibility for all" by Professor Ho Lai Yun of the Singapore Children's Society; both published yesterday).

Examples of such bullying include nasty text or e-mail messages, rumours sent by e-mail or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites or fake profiles.

A Touch Cyber Wellness survey released last year showed that one in three secondary school students and one in five primary school pupils in Singapore have reported being victims of cyber bullying ("Students alerted to cyber bullying"; Sept 20, 2014).

A 2012 study by Microsoft also found that Singapore had the second-highest rate of online bullying, out of 25 countries, among youth aged eight to 17 ("Harassment a rising worry, laws to be tabled"; Nov 13).

⏪ ed to educate our children on responsible online behaviour and or ⏩ seek help when they are victims of cyber bullying.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has said that it takes a serious view of bullying in schools, following the Shuqun Secondary School incident.

Could the MOE share what forms of anti-bullying policies and programmes are in place in schools and how effective they are? What forms of training do teachers have in dealing with bullying?

Finland has a research-based anti-bullying programme called KiVa, and the United States has the Olweus bullying prevention programme. The adoption of these reputed programmes could be further researched for their effectiveness and possible implementation in schools here.

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