

# TEACHERS' GUIDE ENDING

ICT & Early School Leaving. Developing a New Methodology to Empower Children in Digital Wellbeing and Critical Thinking

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*Teachers' guide. Ending*



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# INTRODUCTION

For years, early school drop-out has been one of the most serious problems facing the education system in the different countries of the European Union. Among the factors currently having the greatest impact on school drop-out rates are those related to the misuse of new technologies and the risks involved in exposure to a digital environment to which young people, from an increasingly younger age, are exposed.

The ENDING project's mission is to develop an innovative method based on the active participation of young people to identify, understand and overcome the risks that new technologies pose to their personal and academic development. Finishing school and knowing how to handle oneself properly in a digital world is fundamental for the future of our adolescents and, therefore, the framework of action of the ENDING project.

This **Teachers' Guide** has been developed as the first intellectual result of the project, based on the experience in multiple areas of the five entities that participate in ENDING.

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The aim of this GUIDE is to provide teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge to be able to support young people in the proper use of ICT, reducing school dropout rates through training and the identification of the risks involved in the misuse of new technologies, as well as misinformation, creating and validating a method that schools can implement on their own.

## The ENDING consortium



Five leading European institutions have joined forces to develop this project, which proposes an innovative and multidisciplinary approach to the factors which, in the field of new technologies, influence early school leaving.

## Fundación MAPFRE



With more than 45 years of experience, we are recognized as a leading global foundation for our commitment to people's wellbeing and social progress. Our mission, as a non-profit institution, is to contribute to improving people's quality of life and the progress of society through multinational programs and activities.

We promote comprehensive education for people, especially children and young people who belong to disadvantage community with the objective of achieving a better society. To achieve this, we work in collaboration with local organisations on projects that support nutrition, health, education and access to the labour market. Over this time, we have completed more than 830 cooperation programs in a total of 23 countries. We have secured food for over 550.000 children and provided access to basic education for five million young people.

Specifically, with regards to Health Promotion, we are working to improve people's health and the quality of their lives through the prevention of non-communicable lifestyle-related diseases. We work in collaboration with public administrations, educational institutions and scientific societies aimed at fostering healthy lifestyle habits. We reach out to people of all ages by implementing educational programs in schools, initiatives to promote health in the workplace and activities aimed at families.

## Policía Nacional

The Spanish National Police Force (Policía Nacional – PN) find their origins in 1824. Since then, it has been growing up to become in 1986 as the updated and specialized police force that it is in the present day. Currently, it is almost 70.000 police officers with competence in all the Spanish territory.

Within the Headquarters of Public Security and Safety of the Spanish National Police be found the Community Policing Central Unit. Its main purpose is to manage relationships between citizens and Police and also promote, monitor and evaluate prevention actions through the coordination of their Community Policing Services distributed throughout the Spanish national territory, except in Catalonia and the Basque Country regions.

Besides this, its other main objective is to promote the implementation of prevention plans for vulnerable groups in society. One of the prevention plans that structure the Community Policing Central Unit is the so-called “*Master Plan for Coexistence and Improvement of Safety in Schools and their Environments*”, in charge of the protection of children and youth through the prevention of any kind of risk that may

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affect minors, as for example the well known nowadays dangers of the Internet through, among other actions, educational and informative activities.

## Stiftung Digitale Chancen

Since its establishment in 2002, Stiftung Digitale Chancen is the remit of the Digital Opportunities Foundation to research the social impact of digitisation, to campaign for equal access to the internet for all people, and to advance digital literacy.

The objectives of the foundation are digital inclusion of all societal groups and counteracting the digital divide. The Foundation works in cooperation with public, civic, and private partners. The projects are funded by federal and European programs as well as by industry. The foundation is working under the patronage of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. In the advisory board, representatives of the major German civil society organisations collaborate and advise the work.

Our projects address a wide range of target groups and fall into three categories:

- *Digital Society*: Digitisation is shaping our day-today life in many aspects and has a huge impact on societal processes. This development needs to be researched, shaped, and put into context.
- *Digital Inclusion*: No access to and lack of knowledge for a competent usage of digital resources can cause or further social disparity. The Foundation enables and fosters the digital inclusion of all people.



- *Digital Competence*: A vital pre-requisite for digital inclusion is digital competence. Training must be provided in a way that is target-group-oriented via innovative formats.

## CEI ISCAP (Politécnica de Porto)



The Polytechnic of Porto (P. Porto) is the largest and one of the most dynamic polytechnic schools in the country. Emerging as first in the Polytechnic ranking, along with other major Universities, it is placed in the upper segment of the higher education national ranking. P. Porto involves 8 schools, more than 20 R&D units, and is the best positioned in international scientific rankings in Portugal. P. PORTO considers its mission to be leader of the Polytechnic subsystem in Portugal, taking social responsibility towards community and society, in an international frame of reference and excellence.

The Centre for Intercultural Studies (CEI) is located at P. Porto's Business School (ISCAP-P.Porto). ISCAP offers its 4600- strong student population a range of innovative BA and MA courses. ISCAP has experience in innovation in learning, creativity and e-learning, constantly improving the teaching staff's methods through the use of technologies.

The Centre for Intercultural Studies of ISCAP-P. Porto develops applied and fundamental research, co-operating with other national and international institutions in scientific, technical and cultural projects. CEI's designation and goals comprehend the whole interdisciplinary field generated by the research, exchange opportunities, scientific events, and editorial projects the team has created along the years within CEI's main research lines: intercultural theories and practices, intercultural communication, and intercultural business.

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The CEI team is composed of over 50 researchers and lecturers from ISCAP-P.PORTO and other national and international institutions, and has the support of a renowned advisory board. CEI hosts and supervises masterclasses, conferences, seminars, two Post-Graduate Courses – in Cultural Resources for Business and in Science, Entrepreneurship and Innovation –, and two MA programs – in Intercultural Studies for Business and in Specialized Translation and Interpreting – with the help of a specialized library and several open access databases.

From the onset, CEI has taken part in countless national and international conferences and publications, funded research projects, and published more than a dozen books for worldwide distribution, in the vast field of intercultural studies. Every year, CEI grants awards to MA dissertations in intercultural studies, offers grants and internships for junior researchers, and publishes E-REI: E-Journal of Intercultural Studies.

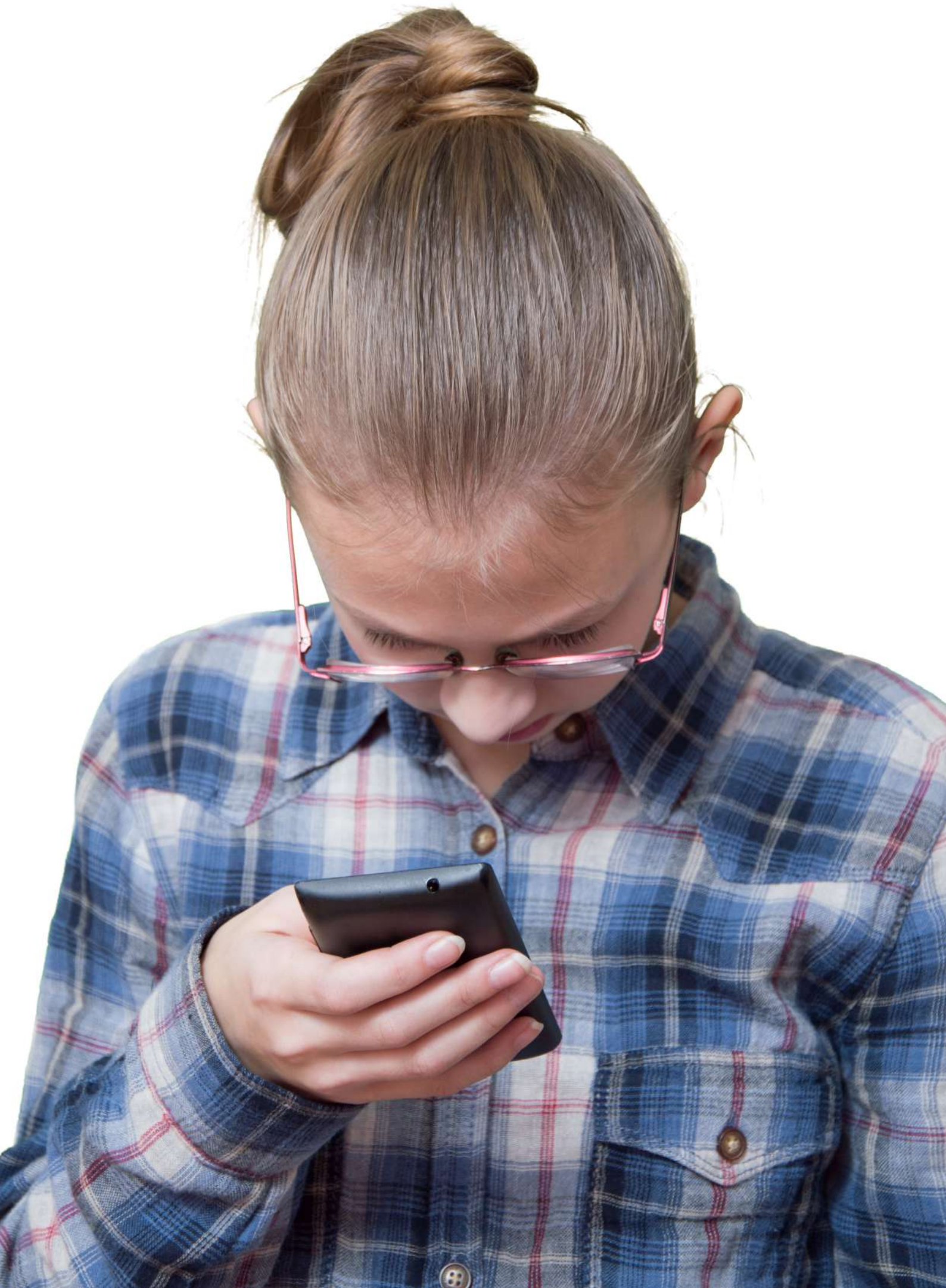
## Pantallas Amigas



PantallasAmigas emerged from the opportunities that ICT offer to minors and the necessity that those minors grow up in a complete, safe and healthy way. The slogan of Pantallas Amigas is “For the Safe and Healthy Use of Communication Technologies and for Responsible Digital Citizenship”, meaning that this is an initiative working for the promotion, participation and protection of children and adolescents in the Internet and other online technologies, since 2004. Creating educational resources and working on raising awareness, outreach and research are its main activities, with a special emphasis on the topics of cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, digital violence against women, critical thinking and privacy. Pantallas Amigas has kept to their hallmarks: strategic use of educational communications, development of life skills,

promotion of universal values, mainstreaming of other educational aspects (inclusion, gender, equality, etc.) and applying innovative methods.

PantallasAmigas (PA) works on a daily basis at educational centers, in direct contact with students and the educational community, promoting different aspects related to digital well-being and digital media literacy among children and adolescents. It has addressed numerous programs related to the use and excessive use of mobile phones, videogames and other connected devices, as well as to the development of critical thinking abilities. In addition, it develops Cybermanagers, an ongoing program based on peer learning and service learning strategies with a focus on promoting coexistence, citizenship and digital health. Cybermanagers Program is a pioneering methodology launched by PA for the first time in January of 2010, which combines two widely tested methodologies – Learning Solidarity Service and peer training – and puts adolescents at the centre of the intervention.



# 1. ANALYSIS LEGISLATIVE COMPARATIVE

Policía Nacional

Taking into account the European and national framework in which the ENDING project takes place, we consider it useful to include at the beginning of this teacher's guide a brief analysis of the comparative legislation concerning the minimum age for Internet use by minors in Germany, Spain and Portugal.

## Germany

In Germany, as in Spain, the minimum age of criminal responsibility is 14, according to Section 19 of the German Penal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch, vom 15. Mai 1871*).

According to Sections 1 and 3 of the Juvenile Protection Act ("Jugendgerichtsgesetz vom 11. Dezember 1974"), in the event that a minor who has reached the age of fourteen but is not yet eighteen<sup>1</sup> commits an

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<sup>1</sup> German juvenile criminal law also applies to so-called "young adults" ("*Heranwachsende*"), defined as persons who, at the time of the commission of the offence, have reached the age of eighteen, but who are not yet twenty-one, according to Section 1 of the Juvenile Protection Act ("Jugendgerichtsgesetz vom 11. Dezember 1974").

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offence, this regulation applies, provided that the minor has reached a sufficient degree of moral and intellectual maturity to enable them to understand the unlawfulness of the act and to behave in accordance with this understanding. A series of measures may be imposed on the responsible minor, including: taking training courses, doing community service, avoiding contact with certain people or places, or even being confined in a detention facility for a maximum of ten years.

Finally, in the event that a person under 14 years of age commits a criminal offence, they will not be subject to any criminal liability.

## Spain

According to Article 19 of the Spanish Penal Code (Organic Law 10/1995 of 23 November, 1995), “persons under eighteen years of age shall not be criminally liable under this Code. When a minor of that age commits a criminal act, they may be liable in accordance with the provisions of the law regulating the criminal liability of minors”. According to Article 1.1 of Organic Law 5/2000, of 12 January, regulating the criminal responsibility of minors: “This Law will be applied to impose responsibility on persons over the age of fourteen and under the age of eighteen<sup>2</sup> for acts classified as crimes or misdemeanours in the Criminal Code or special criminal laws”.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Article 69 of the Spanish Penal Code: “Anyone over the age of eighteen and under the age of twenty-one who commits a criminal offence may be subject to the provisions of the law governing the criminal liability of minors in cases and subject to the requirements laid down therein”. Notwithstanding the above, the regime initially envisaged for this age range in Organic Law 5/2000 is no longer applicable, given that it was repealed by Organic Law 8/2006.

Accordingly, the minimum age of criminal responsibility is fourteen. If a person *over the age of fourteen and under the age of eighteen* commits an offence, they will be held accountable in accordance with the provisions of the aforementioned juvenile criminal law, which includes a series of measures to be imposed depending on the seriousness of the act committed (from community service to internment in a detention centre for a maximum of eight years).

If the offender is *under fourteen years of age*, the provisions of the regulations on the protection of minors provided for in the Civil Code (Art. 3 of Organic Law 5/2000, of 12 January, regulating the criminal responsibility of minors) will apply. Minors under fourteen years of age lack the necessary maturity to assess and be motivated by criminal regulations and to understand their consequences.

## Portugal

According to Article 19 of the Portuguese Penal Code (Decreto-Lei n.º 48/95, de 15 de Março): “persons under sixteen years of age are not criminally liable”. Therefore, persons under this age are not liable under this regulation, as they are not capable of understanding the illegality of their acts.

According to Article 1 of the Educational Guardianship Law (Lei tutelar educativa, Lei n.º 166/99, de 14 de setembro): “the committing, by a minor between 12 and 16 years of age, of an act qualified by law as an offence shall give rise to the application of an educational guardianship measure in accordance with the provisions of this law”. These educational guardianship measures include the implementation of training programmes, alcohol or substance abuse rehabilitation, and even internment in a detention centre for a maximum of three years,

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in order to internalise the values that will enable the person to govern their life in a socially and legally responsible manner, as indicated in Article 17.1 of the regulation.

Finally, persons under the age of 12 who commit an offence are considered victims, not perpetrators or offenders.



## 2. ICT ABUSE.HEALTH & WELLNESS

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are all those tools and programmes that process, manage, transmit and share information through technological supports. Although ICTs range from the classic ones such as radio and television to the new technologies centred fundamentally on the Internet and all electronic devices connected to the network, it is the latter that we will refer to as ICTs.

ICTs are part of our lives, facilitating day-to-day life and interpersonal relationships. It is important to know how to use them properly and the dangers of their misuse for our health. One of the risks involved in the misuse of ICTs is early school leaving. In many cases, young people spend their study or sleep time on other leisure activities on the Internet, which in some cases leads to lower academic performance.

Since the appearance of ICTs, different pathologies have emerged that affect both the physical and mental health of people who, through misuse or addiction, spend many hours in front of screen devices (computers, mobiles, tablets, consoles, etc.). Although the use of ICTs

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offers numerous benefits, it should not be forgotten that they can be accompanied by health hazards, especially in adolescents, the age group most at risk. Therefore, these dangers must be known in order to prevent them.

## 2.1. Identification of physical symptoms

These are due to the continuous, excessive and relentless use of devices, as well as the bad habits that develop in terms of these. Depending on which organ or system of the body is affected there are different problems:



### Ligament problems

- *Quervain's tendonitis or tenosynovitis*: "Gamer's thumb" produced by repeated thumb movements that cause inflammation and pain in the tendons that connect to it.
- *Tenosynovitis or trigger finger*: locking of the finger in its flexion movement due to chronic inflammation of the tendons.
- *Epicondylitis ("tennis elbow")*: painful inflammation of the tendon where it attaches to the bone on the outside of the elbow caused by misuse of the mouse by not resting the wrists on the table and keeping the arms away from the body, or by the use of console and game controllers that simulate sporting movements.
- *Supraspinatus tendonitis*: produced by inflammation of the tendon as it rubs between the head of the humerus and the acromial arch during repeated shoulder lifting movements in situations where there is poor ergonomics.

- *Rotator cuff injuries*: similar to the previous issue, but involving the tendons of the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor and subscapularis rotator muscles.



**Recommendations:** avoid long sessions without breaks, practice stretching exercises for the muscles and tendons that affect the joints of the fingers, wrist, elbow and shoulder, use comfortable and ergonomic devices that avoid forced movements. If you already have an injury, you must stop this activity and go to a health professional for evaluation and treatment. (Physiotherapy guide, 2020).



## Osteo-muscular problems

- *Neck pain*: neck pain is usually caused by a forced posture with the neck extended over the shoulders or the neck bent forward to use a mobile phone, tablet or laptop at the level of the legs, etc.
- *Back pain and lower back pain*: middle and lower back pain caused by poor postures involving prolonged bending without adequate back and lumbar support.
- *Early osteoarthritis and arthritis in the fingers*: finger joints that operate devices can make hundreds of movements per minute, subjecting the joint to early joint inflammation and wear and tear. A particularly overloaded finger is the thumb at its base, causing early osteoarthritis of that joint (“BlackBerry thumb”).
- *Injuries and accidents*: due to the use of devices, usually mobile devices, while walking around the city or driving vehicles.

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**Recommendations:** avoid awkward postures by adopting proper ergonomics in front of screens. Avoid long periods without rest. Do stretching and strengthening exercises for the muscles that surround the spine. Do not use mobile phones as they distract us from other actions that require our attention, such as walking along, crossing streets, and driving vehicles.



## Nerve problems

- *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome*: this is inflammation of the tissues and tendons that cross the wrist through the carpal tunnel. It is frequent in fixed and repeated manual activities over long periods with poor wrist posture, e.g., when using the mouse and keyboard with the wrist extended.
- *Paresthesia*: described as tingling and numbness in fingers, hands, elbows, arms, thighs, legs and feet from sustained compression against the edges of remotes, tables, chairs, or other objects, or from sustained forced bending of the limbs.
- *Pain, loss of sensation and strength*: if the nerve compression is maintained over time it progressively affects the nerve until it is permanently damaged.
- *Non-existent vibration syndrome or “phantom vibration”*: This is an alteration of the sensitivity in which the device is felt to vibrate when there is actually no vibration. This is typical when someone continually uses their mobile phone in vibration mode (Cuozzo, Tusq, Veigas and Velasquez, 2011).
- *Enuresis and encopresis*: or urinary and fecal incontinence. This disorder is due to prolonged inhibition of the reflex to urinate or defecate in order to avoid switching off from the video game.



**Recommendations:** avoid postures where the nerves of the extremities are flexed or compressed. Do not stay in a position in which you begin to experience symptoms. Move around. Massage the area. Take rest periods and do not ignore the nervous signals that the body emits to satisfy its biological needs.



## Visual problems

- *Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS)*: this consists of the appearance of vision-related symptoms that increase as a function of the time someone is exposed to digital screens. Digital eye strain involves itching or stinging eyes, a gritty sensation and dryness accompanied by blurred vision, even double vision due to focus fatigue, photophobia, dizziness, and headache, especially in the orbital or parietal area of the head.
- *Myopia*: it has been found that myopic children spend more time using screens and less time outdoors than children without myopia (Álvarez Peregrina *et al.*, 2020).



**Recommendations:** since the main cause is prolonged exposure to screens, the best way to avoid this is to take breaks to rest your eyes. The “20-20-20” exercise involves taking breaks every 20 minutes that we use devices or screens and, for 20 seconds, looking at a distance of more than 20 meters. This will relax your vision and allow your eyes to rest better before you continue to look at the screen. In addition, a minimum separation of 50 cm from any type of screen is recommended. Spend less than two hours a day with display devices and engage in outdoor activities. (Hernández Tiscareño, 2020).

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## Hearing problems

- *Premature deafness* due to the use of headphones and earphones constantly at an excessive sound level with frequent peaks in sound intensity. According to the WHO, sound levels that exceed 85 decibels pose a risk of hearing loss if repeated over time or the exposure is continuous (Gutierrez Farmán, *et al.*, 2018).
- *Tinnitus*: this consists of someone hearing persistent noises and beeps when they are in a silent room. One of its causes is exposure to loud and prolonged noise.



**Recommendations:** using devices at a volume that allows us to hear another person speaking to us is most suitable, and this should never exceed 70 decibels. As far as possible, headphones should be avoided and the external speaker used (Dios *et al.* 2013).



## Metabolic and heart problems:

- *Obesity*: this has two fundamental causes, the lack of physical activity because the time dedicated to sports activities is substituted for sedentary activities in front of screens and, secondly, there is the tendency to eat both more and worse in front of the screens while playing. The food consumed is usually fast food or industrial, highly processed and high in calories, frequently accompanied by sugary or alcoholic soft drinks (Kenney and Gortmaker, 2017).
- *Diabetes*: predisposition to diabetes occurs as a result of obesity, lack of physical exercise and excessive intake of very high glycemic index foods (simple carbohydrates) and sugary drinks.

- *Hypercholesterolemia*: eating foods rich in cholesterol and saturated fats, ultra-processed foods and a lack of physical exercise are the main causes of high cholesterol in young people.
- *Arterial hypertension*: obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, excess intake of salt and saturated fat from ultra-processed foods are the cause of high blood pressure.
- *Cardiac arrhythmia*: in people who are susceptible to heart disease, arrhythmias and unconsciousness have been described when playing intense video games (Swift Yasgur, 2019).



**Recommendations:** respect the time dedicated to physical activities outdoors, do not eat in front of screens, take breaks, and respect meal times, eat healthily (Mediterranean food) and hydrate with water or unsweetened drinks.



## Vascular problems

- *Cold hand syndrome*: caused by compressing the wrist over the edge of the table.
- *Edema in legs and feet*: this is an increase in the volume of fluid that accumulates in the tissues of the legs and feet, swelling them due to fluid retention.
- *Varicose veins, phlebitis and thrombophlebitis in the legs*: these are different degrees of injury to the veins produced by remaining sitting motionless, for many hours and in a repetitive way, in front of a screen.

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**Recommendations:** avoid sitting with your legs bent, getting up from the seat every 30 minutes, walking around, doing sporting activities, stretching your limbs and giving yourself a massage. When playing it is best to keep your legs up and stretched out.



## Sleep disorder

- The presence of electronic devices in the bedroom (television, game consoles), the use of the Internet and keeping the mobile phone on under the pillow answering messages and calls at any time, all have a negative influence on the quantity, quality and presence of specific sleep disorders (conciliation insomnia, intermittent sleep and early awakening).



**Recommendations:** it is necessary to explain to the students that it is important to take devices out of their bedrooms, as the use of electronic devices just before going to bed makes it difficult to fall asleep.

## 2.2. Identifying psychological symptoms of ICT abuse (use, abuse and addiction)

Although our uses of ICT are very diverse, three large categories can be established depending on the type of relationship that each person has with this technology. This division helps us to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate use, and their possible negative consequences.



These categories are: use, abuse and addiction

- *Use*: the ICT use is just one activity among many, so that if it is interrupted it does not cause the person any discomfort, nor does it affect the normal development of their life.
- *Abuse*: abuse or inappropriate use is understood when the relationship with the technology, either in terms of the amount of time, frequency, or type of use, can have negative consequences on the user and their environment.
- *Addiction*: the ICT use is prioritized over other activities, affecting the other areas of that person's life, so that not being connected generates a high degree of discomfort.

Addictive Internet behavior is characterized by three main symptoms:

- *Tolerance*: the need to increase the time spent using technology to generate the same effect
- *Abstinence*: an unpleasant sensation is experienced when technology cannot be used. For this reason it is used increasingly more and for longer periods.
- *Dependence*: when the person needs to progressively increase the usage time and also feels bad if they cannot do this.

In developed societies, the availability of new technologies is very extensive, however, only a small number of people develop addiction (around 3-6%).

Certain factors can influence these types of people:

1. Psychological factors:

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- *Personality variables*: impulsivity, thrill-seeking and rule-breaking, low self-esteem, intolerance to unpleasant stimuli, inadequate coping mechanisms, excessive shyness, body image issues.
- *Emotional vulnerability*: mood dysphoria (anxiety or depression), emotional deficits, weak family cohesion, poor social relations, personal dissatisfaction with life.
- *Prior psychiatric problems*: depression, ADHD, social phobia, social hostility: looking for a way to solve their discomfort.

## 2. Family factors:

- *Very rigid and authoritarian family environments*: these foster dependent, irresponsible, or rebellious children.
- *Very permissive or unstructured family environments with inconsistencies*: these foster self-centered, capricious and impulsive children.

## 3. Social factors:

- *Social isolation*: they use ICT as a means of communication.
- *Relationships with people who abuse new technologies*: through their desire to belong to the group their actions are copied.

The misuse of ICT can cause alterations in behavior, mood and relationships with the outside world, especially if this becomes an addiction, it can cause aggressiveness, social and family isolation, decrease academic or work performance, displace other necessary biological activities, favor criminal or antisocial behavior, lead to pathological gambling or consumption of toxic substances, and produce misinformation, manipulation, harassment or loss of privacy (Buiza Aguado, 2018).

In short, Internet dependence should be suspected when:

- There is excessive use associated with a loss of control and the individual experiences withdrawal when they are unable to connect, just as with chemical addictions.
- There are withdrawal symptoms (deep emotional distress, anxiety, irritability, psychomotor agitation and mood dysphoria) due to the inability to access the Internet.
- Tolerance is established (increasing need for longer periods of Internet connection in order to feel okay).
- There are negative repercussions on the individual's daily life (isolation, low academic or work performance, lack of interest in other matters and active leisure) (Echeburúa, 2012).

### 2.2.1. Situations of conflict

#### DEVICE DEPENDENCY

- Nomophobia

This consists of an irrational fear, restlessness, anxiety and great distress due to not having a mobile phone, because the individual has left it at home, the battery has run out, it has no coverage, it has no balance, it has been stolen or lost, or it has simply broken. Another characteristic symptom is the inability to turn off the mobile even in places where its use is prohibited. The mobile phone must be close at hand at all times, even while sleeping, which causes numerous cases of insomnia as messages are continuously received and the individual feels the need to read and respond to them, interrupting their natural sleep cycle.

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Nomophobia is related to FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) or fear of being disconnected, missing messages or WhatsApps, or breaking contact with social networks.

It is advisable to reinforce the healthy habit of turning off the mobile phone for several hours a day, especially at night, as well as having a specific plan to avoid interruptions during other life activities (work, meetings, in the cinema, theater, etc.) (Nomophobia, 2018).

- Mobile addiction

Referred to in various ways (such as “crackBerry”), this makes it impossible for the individual to keep doing any task if a notification pops up, as it is imperative that they see its content. Or the need to continually check their email account, or other apps.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Through social networking on the Internet, young people can participate in experiences with other people they do not know, but who are part of the virtual community. They show interest in their photos, preferences, beliefs and shared experiences. Social networks are also a barrier-free introduction that can be used to share goods, services, comments and knowledge with others and, above all, to transmit emotions, experiences and preferences. Social networks are also emotional networks.

Many adolescents are at risk of social network addiction, even dependence, because in some way they are more concerned about being permanently active online and do not want to miss out on anything that happens in the virtual communities they are part of. The mood of many of them can be modified according to the number of “likes” they

get and the comments they receive on their profile posts; in many cases this leads to dangerous overexposure.

### INTERNET ADDICTION AS PATHOLOGY

- Gaming disorder

Nowadays, video games have become part of the leisure activities of young people and, as such, they entertain and amuse them in their free time. In addition, many of them help to develop collaborative and social skills, teach cultural knowledge, stimulate creativity and transmit values (eagerness to excel, respect for the team, tolerance, sportsmanship, solidarity, and so forth).

The problem arises when this activity moves from being a hobby and a leisure activity to becoming the center of a person's life and an addiction.

In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) included Gaming Disorder as one of the mental disorders included in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). This will come into effect in 2022.

Some of the most prominent symptoms, and those to pay attention to if they appear, are:

- Constant preoccupation with playing at all times and in all places, for long periods of time and constantly increasing the time spent playing.
- This isolates the person, who becomes irritable, resulting in poorer communication with others.
- Lying to family and friends about the time played.

# ENDING

- When the individual is prevented from playing, there are emotional and affective consequences such as depression, aggressiveness, anxiety and phobias.
- It can cause serious sleep disorders that affect future development.
- The individual's eating habits change, and there is a predilection for fast food or eating in their room while playing.
- They develop postural problems, muscle aches and physical injuries, especially in their back and hands.
- They lose interest in other hobbies or pastimes.
- The individual changes their schedules so that they can play, and they postpone their homework or other tasks.
- Their academic performance drops considerably.
- They try to justify themselves by saying that their friends do the same, or that they need them to play.

## ONLINE BETTING

It is becoming easier to access betting on sports and games of chance (poker, roulette, etc.) through mobile and computer apps, and these can be accessed 24 hours-a-day, including low-value bets that make teenagers and young people believe that the risk is minimal.

The immediacy, ease of access, anonymity, and the intimate environment provided by ICT make the online universe the perfect space for developing addictive behaviors, including gambling distress.

Gambling addiction or Gambling Disorder is recognized by the World Health Organization. It involves “a persistent and recurring gambling problem”, causing clinically significant impairment or discomfort. This disorder can develop with any type of game of chance (slot machines, bingo, roulette, poker, betting on sports, lotteries, etc.).

Online gambling is very addictive for various reasons:

- Seemingly easy earnings.
- Ease: everyone can play, no special skills are needed.
- It guarantees anonymity.
- There are no restrictions. Gambling can be done at any time and from any device with an internet connection.
- Minimum stakes are required. You can start betting with just one euro.

Teachers must explain to adolescents that since they are minors they cannot gamble. It is not legal and they would be committing a crime. In addition, it is important to convey the risks of gambling, which go beyond gambling disorder, such as: nervousness, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, poor diet, increased spending, indebtedness, lying, worsening of family relationships, petty theft at home, problems with academic performance or absenteeism, and distancing themselves from friends who refuse to gamble, among other things.

Likewise, these risks are also obvious signs of gambling in minors. Therefore, if any of these signs is detected, it is important to talk to them about the problem and inform their families so that they can help, and, if necessary, get specialist help.

### 2.2.2. Tips for action in schools. Prevention of ICT addictions

Preventing addictive problems requires the efforts of parents and educators to empower adolescents with certain personal and family resources (Labrador, Requesens, & Helguera, 2015) .

#### PERSONAL RESOURCES

- *Promoting self-esteem*: self esteem makes it possible to regulate behavior and exert self-control, improving the individual's emotional balance.
- *Improving social relationships and communication*: this makes it difficult to create an imaginary virtual world as opposed to the real one.
- *Increasing problem-solving ability*: promoting the development of critical thinking that allows us to make good decisions.
- *Improving emotional control*: enabling adequate coping under stress, avoiding unnecessary suffering and undesirable behavior.
- *Adequate leisure activities*: providing leisure alternatives other than technology that satisfy the need for new and varied sensations to combat boredom.

#### TEACHING RESOURCES

Although abusive and/or inappropriate use of ICT among minors is easier to detect by the parents of these individuals, some symptoms may make us suspect that a student has a problem of this type:

- Decreased academic performance.
- Signs of physical fatigue from not getting enough sleep.
- Comments about the night they spent playing with their teammates.



It is advisable to talk to other teachers and some of their classmates to confirm your suspicions. If you do receive confirmation, the counselor / tutor at the center should speak with the individual to convey their concern and find out if the individual is aware of the problem and willing to accept help.

The student must understand that their parents must be informed of the situation, if they do not already know. The individual may be receptive to this idea or, in contrast, adopt a defensive and negative attitude, but the family still needs to know.

To develop good digital health and prevent a possible ICT addiction, as well as other associated problems, it is important to bear in mind a series of recommendations:

- Help students to plan their free time by limiting the time they spend on ICT. Talk to parents and establish usage times and places.
- During recess time, organize entertainment alternatives to the use of ICT, such as sports tournaments, popular games, artistic activities, and so on, to avoid the formation of groups and cliques where mobile phones are used.
- Do not allow ICT to be a barrier between adults and young people. Try to stay as up-to-date as possible in terms of the tools they use.
- Ensure that they have fulfilled their responsibilities before doing activities that involve ICT.
- Encourage parents to share time with their children in the use of ICT. Browse with them and play their favorite games from time to time. This will facilitate and improve communication in the family environment.
- Explain to young people the risks of coming into contact with strangers. Comparisons with real life can be very useful, making them aware of the risks they are exposed to on and offline.

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- Teach them to protect their privacy. It is important to explain to them what personal data is (including photographs), as well as the risks involved in sharing this with strangers.
- Convey to parents the importance of using parental control systems to prevent access to web pages that are not recommended for young people, as well as contact with strangers. This should be done at least during the first years of ICT use.
- Be an example to follow.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL

### ICT addictions

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To know and identify the main physical and psychological symptoms of misuse of new technologies.
- To become aware of the symptoms and sensations we have when using new technologies in order to be able to differentiate when it is a problem derived from misuse or from another cause, and thus ask for help if necessary.
- To help in the prevention and healthy use of new technologies.

#### PREPARATION

In this workshop, different activities will be developed so that students can differentiate the physical and psychological symptoms, etc., caused by the abusive use of new technologies. Paper and pencil, tablet or computer and blackboard will be needed to write down the different symptoms, the total results and the winner.

#### PROCEDURE

Duration: 40-50 minutes.

##### *Step 1*

The class will be divided into groups of approximately 3 students.

##### *Step 2*

The teacher will share out one of the physical symptoms (ligament, muscular, nervous, visual, auditory, metabolic, vascular, sleep...)

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and psychological symptoms (addiction and abuse, nomophobia, dependence on social networks, video game disorder and pathological gambling) between each of the groups.

### *Step 3*

The teacher knows the “symptoms” that belong to each group, but the students do not know which “symptom” they have among themselves.

### *Step 4*

In turn, each group has to act out the physical or psychological ‘symptom’ (they will have 30 seconds) and the peers in the other groups will try to guess it. Once guessed, the group will explain their symptom and how to avoid it.

### *Step 5*

The group that guesses the most symptoms will be the winner of the activity.

### REFLECTION / CONCLUSIONS

- Good use of ICTs leads to good physical and emotional health.
- Digital health is the responsible use of new technologies, both in terms of security and in terms of time and usability.
- To achieve good digital, physical and emotional health, it is necessary to have time to disconnect from ICTs, to carry out activities with friends, family, etc., to be aware of the risks and to know how to turn to the relevant entities to be able to solve them.

# 3. MISUSE OF CONNECTED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

PantallasAmigas

## 3.1. Some criminal behaviours that can be committed through ICTs

There are four fundamental factors that lead many adolescents to commit online actions outside the limits of the law:

- The feeling of impunity, derived from the ignorance of not knowing that there is criminal or civil liability, thinking that what is done is not a crime, or because doing it online makes it more difficult to detect the perpetrators.
- The perception that everything is permitted on the Internet because there are many things of all kinds, including illegal ones, exposed for anyone to see.
- The feeling that it is very difficult to prosecute and identify those who commit crimes online, either for technical reasons or for reasons of availability and prioritization of the necessary resources.
- The ease and immediacy with which unlawful acts can be committed, even unintentionally, with nothing more than an internet-connected device.

### 3.1.1. Threats, coercion, insults, slander, etc.

Blackmail, coercion, extortion, threat... are names that refer to different, more or less serious, non-lawful ways of trying to condition people's freedom. The difference between them may be great or subtle, but in any case, they constitute a crime, since it is a deliberate attempt to affect the free exercise of another person's own will. The law prosecutes this criminal conduct, like all other criminal conduct, whether it takes place on or off the internet.

On the other hand, insult, which is also considered a form of verbal aggression, and which can take the form of libel and slander, is a way of affecting the right to honor and one's own image and, as such, falls outside the scope of the law.

It is, in short, easy to carry out behavior that may constitute a crime, and whose execution is not only facilitated but also amplified by the characteristics of the network.

If we add to this the possibility of aggravating circumstances, such as public or written (with publicity), we see that the problem becomes more complex and, in any case, more serious for both victims and perpetrators.

### 3.1.2. Computer-related damage

Sometimes, for a specific purpose or simply for entertainment, teenagers 'hack' websites, extract passwords from user accounts or perform similar actions by introducing certain malicious software into servers or devices. This could constitute, among other things, a cybercrime offence.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention other criminal conduct, such as the offence of discovery and disclosure of secrets, which includes behaviour such as accessing another person's e-mail or intercepting their communications.

### **3.1.3. Crimes against intellectual property**

Thanks to the Internet, it is possible to directly or indirectly access an inexhaustible source of digital goods and services: image banks, books, software, video games, music, films... Everything, absolutely everything, has an intellectual authorship that is usually linked to rights of use and exploitation. Sometimes, whoever owns the authorship and intellectual property allows certain free uses of that good or service under specific conditions. When a person decides to use or commercialise a digital good or service without proper authorisation, he or she could be committing an intellectual property offence.

### **3.1.4. Gender based cyberviolence**

The violence that an adolescent can inflict on his or her partner or ex-partner takes on a new dimension with the internet. For example, the psychological violence of control can materialise in the form of interference in the teenage girl's communications (usually via instant messaging such as WhatsApp or social networks such as Instagram), affecting their nature, privacy, content or recipients. The following behaviours are the most common when it comes to exercising such violence. Firstly, that which requires the adolescent partner to send or record intimate images (sexting). Secondly, sextortion, which involves using an intimate image of the adolescent partner as a coercive element to obtain some kind of advantage from them, by threatening that

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the image will be published or shared. Finally, digital gender-based violence can take perhaps its cruelest form, when the relationship has already ended, with the sole purpose of causing harm. In this case, it is the non-consensual publication of intimate images, also misleadingly referred to as “revenge porn”, “revenge porn” or “revenge porn”, because it is neither porn nor is it supposed to be an affront in the origin of any revenge; moreover, in the event that these images are forwarded, a crime would be committed.

It is important to talk about cyber-violence within the couple, since when these behaviours are exercised by a woman towards a man, they also constitute a crime.

Mention should also be made of stalking, which consists of insistently and repeatedly carrying out, without being legitimately authorised, a series of harassing behaviours, seriously altering the development of the victim’s daily life. Among the possible forms of harassment is the following: “establishing or attempting to establish contact with the victim through any means of communication”.

## 3.2. Hate speech

According to the Council of Europe, the term “hate speech” shall include all expressions that disseminate, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed through aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and persons with a migrant background. This definition includes all forms of expression (texts, but also images or videos) in any medium, including the internet.



With billions of people interconnected on hundreds of platforms communicating and posting messages simultaneously, it is difficult to identify and manage hate speech. Hate speech is generally banned on most social media platforms, but is otherwise protected to some extent by freedom of expression.

It seems clear that using the internet to generate hate speech is not a desirable use of the internet. Hate speech on the internet is a serious problem because of the speed with which it can amplify and multiply. They are often linked to disinformation strategies and campaigns, adding to their reach an innocuous appearance that makes them more dangerous.

It is necessary to distinguish between hate speech and hate crimes, which can also occur, and do so with increasing prevalence, on the internet. The most common hate crimes are criminal offences that severely punish those who publicly encourage, promote or incite, directly or indirectly, hatred, hostility, discrimination or violence against a group, a part of a group or against a specific person because of their membership, for racist, anti-Semitic or other reasons related to ideology, religion or beliefs, family situation, membership of an ethnic group, race or nation, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or identity, gender, illness or disability.

### 3.3. Overexposure

Overexposure, also known as oversharing, refers to the attitude of posting too much personal information on social networks or the internet, which leads to an immediate loss of privacy and, consequently, to increased vulnerability. Information, photos and videos,

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tags and metadata, such as geolocation, published by oneself, not always consciously, become irretrievable. It should also be borne in mind that this overexposure has a phenomenal amplifier both in social platforms (eager to have data to share with third parties), and in the people with whom this information is shared or to whom it eventually reaches. Many adolescents, when questioned about their compulsion to share personal information, say that they do so because “they have nothing to hide” or because “they have nothing to lose”. We need to provoke them to reflect on this, because privacy is a protective factor and everyone is also a custodian of the personal data of others.

At this point it is important to know these concepts associated with the exhibition:

- *Digital footprint* is the trace we leave when we visit those pages we go to or want to go through.
- *Digital identity* is what we are for other people on the net, or rather, what the net says we are. This identity can be seen in our use and consumption of 2.0 tools and social networks.
- *Online reputation* refers to the prestige of a person on the internet. This depends on the information we choose to share and the information they provide, through comments and opinions.

## 3.4. Inappropriate viral challenges

Challenges are not new. Before the internet, they also existed, but they did not have the degree of popularity or the possibility of global reach that they have now. This makes overcoming a challenge, whatever it may be, very attractive because, in the worst case scenario, you can always add a few views, followers or “likes”.

Broadly speaking and for obvious reasons, viral challenges should be avoided if they can:

- Involve a breach of the law or mandatory rules at the place and time concerned.
- To pose a risk to the physical or psychological integrity of the persons taking part.
- Endanger third parties.
- Result in material damage of any kind.
- Cause annoyance, offence or contempt for other people.
- Contain an effect or lead to an unforeseeable end.
- Involve, without prior and express consent, third parties or violate their privacy.
- Affect the right to honour, privacy and self-image of other people, especially if they are minors or have some kind of intellectual or developmental disability.

Taking all these considerations into account, it may be necessary to exclude many of the viral challenges that circulate on social platforms on a regular basis. It is also worth asking, in relation to age, what types of viral challenges are faced and whether it is appropriate to publish them openly on the internet.

There are an infinite number of challenges and it is always possible to choose one that is stimulating and, while avoiding the detailed restrictions, is fun and engaging.

### 3.5. Tips for school action

#### 3.5.1. Action guidelines to be followed by teachers

It could be said that the misuse of the Internet by minors is always due to one or more of these factors, which are reinforced by the accelerated pace of our time:

- Lack of life experience.
- Inappropriate values.
- Inadequate risk perception.
- Insufficient development of some personal skills.
- Lack of digital skills.

Many of these factors are not dissimilar to those involved in problems offline or even with adults. Like other problems that have nothing to do with the internet, there are risk and protective factors that are both online and offline. The key then is to focus on what is important now and what has changed. On the other hand, a teenager's misuse of the internet can be conditioned by both the medium and other people, and intervening in this can also help. The following are some recommended lines of intervention.

- *Promoting a culture of privacy*: Privacy is not only a right, but also a protective factor. The more your adversary or enemy can know about you, the more vulnerable you are.
- *Boosting cybersecurity*: the path that links us to other people is also a gateway for those who wish to do harm. Secure connections and devices can prevent sensitive situations and misuse.
- *Increasing the perception of interdependence*: realising that the network is just that, a set of interconnected nodes in which all people have links to those they relate to and who affect them. Thus, the

cybersecurity of the people with whom someone relates and their privacy management also affects that person, and vice versa. It is a collective issue.

- *Promoting the feeling of belonging to a community*: the network is what we make of it, it is a question of co-responsibility, of commitment, of digital citizenship.
- *Increased knowledge of legal limits and responsibilities*: knowing the rules of the game in this regard will help those who may seek to affect the rights of others to reflect beforehand and to better self-protect those who may be suffering some form of online victimisation.
- *Developing skills for digital life*: today's life is hybrid, it takes place on both sides of the screen, and although they are not two life experiences that are isolated, for the moment they follow not entirely similar rules. In order to live the digital part of our lives better, we need to strengthen with special emphasis some skills such as empathy (which allows us to better perceive other people on the other side of the screen), critical thinking (to unmask information, services and people) and emotional management (to face the permanent challenges that assail us in this intense life without disconnection).

### 3.5.2. Examples of action strategies

When we talk about victimisation and there is another person on the other side, the development of educational interventions where students are active agents and protagonists makes more sense. It is a matter of no longer considering them as the cause of the problem or subjects to be protected, but of giving them a voice and a leading role, in an active exercise of co-responsibility, of exercising their rights and duties. Two practical examples are given with different levels of depth and dedication:

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- *Service-learning and peer-to-peer*, where older students, after preparation, carry out awareness-raising work with younger students and also with adults. The Ending project incorporates this methodology.
- *Definition of “netiquette”*, consisting of promoting among pupils the development of their own rules of the game and coexistence in digital socialisation environments. In short, it would be the collective creation of self-imposed “community rules” to jointly enjoy a specific collective online space.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL

### Gender sexual cyberviolence

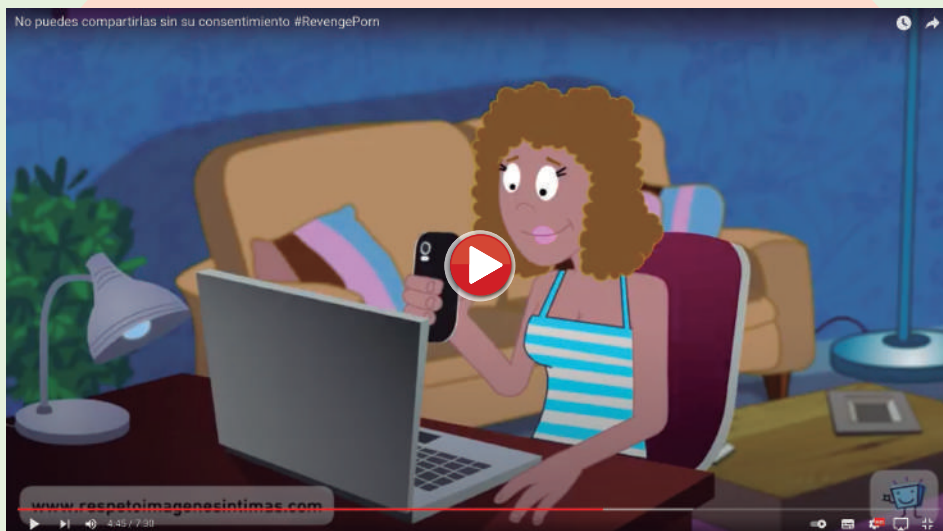
#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognise the non-consensual distribution of intimate images as a practice of gender-based cyberviolence and a crime.
- Raise awareness of the difference between consent to take images and permission to distribute them.
- Reflect on the importance of society in general not participating in the victimisation of women whose privacy has been violated and to avoid viewing, commenting on or redistributing such images.

#### PREPARATION

Online access to the audiovisual piece used as the axis for the dynamics. If you do not have Internet access, it is possible to download it in advance.

Video: **“No puedes compartirlas sin su consentimiento #RevengePorn”**  
(Duration: 7' 30")



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The following ideas should be made clear throughout the activity:

- The fact that someone has agreed to record their intimacy with another person does not give anyone, not even that person, the right to share or publish the images.
- Although it is known as revenge porn, it is neither porn nor revenge. Nothing justifies the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.
- This form of sexual gender-based cyber-violence has very serious consequences for its victims and carries a heavy legal penalty for the perpetrator.
- It is important that society, each and every one of us, does not share these types of images, that we do not even view them, that we reprimand those around us for doing so and that we report them. We must contribute to breaking the chain

## PROCEDURE

Estimated duration of the activity: 40-50 minutes.

### *Step 1: viewing of the animation.*

The animated story develops a case of non-consensual distribution of intimate images of an ex-partner with the aim of causing harm. This practice is also known as revenge porn, revenge porn or revenge porn. It is a form of sexual gender-based cyber-violence.

### *Step 2: Discussion.*

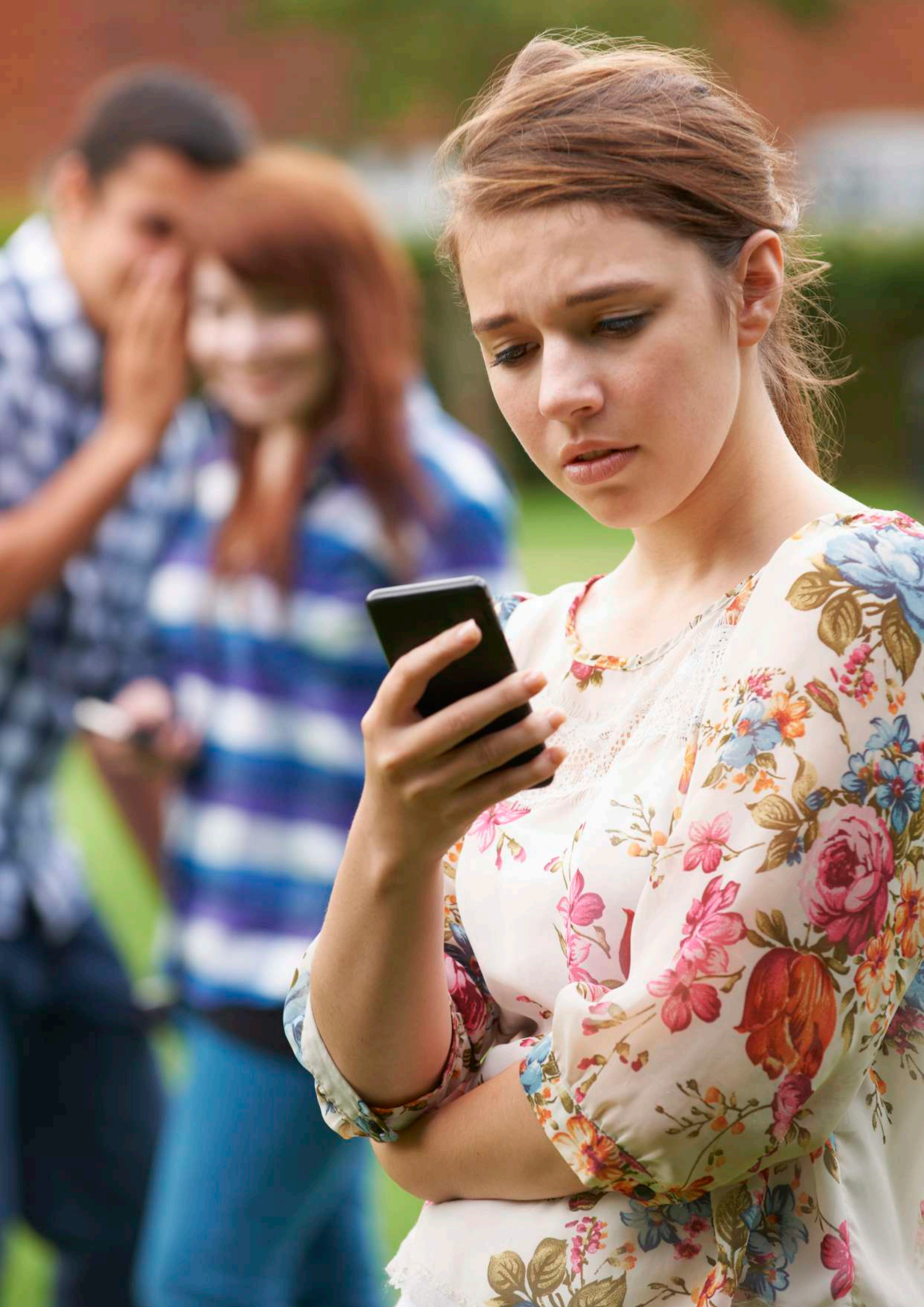
A joint discussion will be held in order to reach the planned conclusions based on the students' own initial positions.



- Which people suffer negative consequences in this story? Which ones?
- Who is responsible for this?
- Is her behaviour fair and is his behaviour fair?
- What role can friendships play in situations like this?
- Is it positive to ask the family for help in such cases, why, and is it possible not to ask them for help?

*Step 3: Proposals for action.*

After dividing the class into several groups, preferably mixed, each group is asked to create a list of at least three measures that everyone can take to avoid this type of victimisation. After pooling their contributions, a consensus is reached to select a final list of 3 to 5 measures.



# 4. CYBERBULLYING AND SECURITY

Policía Nacional

## 4.1. What is cyberbullying

In order to define cyberbullying, we must first understand what bullying is. *Bullying in schools* is understood to be the repeated and continuous mistreatment or harassment over time by a minor or a group of minors of another minor, with the purpose of harming them in a clearly intentional manner.

It is important to determine that for a situation of bullying to occur, differentiating it from a one-off conflict between peers, it must include three fundamental characteristics:

1. There is *intentionality*, i.e., a conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten.
2. An *imbalance of power* between the minor or minors who harass and the minor who is the victim, which may be real or also a subjective perception of the minor.
3. A *reiteration* in the action, in other words, the behavior occurs repeatedly, methodically and systematically over a prolonged period of time.

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From this point on, *cyberbullying at school* is defined as the same type of bullying that is carried out through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Cyberbullying through ICT is carried out via networks, including the telephone network, using terminals such as computers, smartphones or video game consoles and also through the services that these ICT offer to consumers, such as email, social networks or mobile device apps.

As stated by UNESCO, “ICT can complement, enrich and transform education”, a good example of this being the new situation to which the COVID-19 pandemic led us, when ICT proved to be an indispensable tool, allowing teaching activities to continue. But this technology also means a new way of relating to others, not free of multiple risks, especially for minors. For this reason, in the educational field it is necessary to determine the extent of the risks that the use of technology entails for children and adolescents, including cyberbullying.

In addition to the commonalities that cyberbullying shares with bullying, other characteristics of cyberbullying at school make it different, even producing a situation that carries a greater burden of harm for the victim.

Firstly, cyberbullying is primarily characterized by the fact that it takes place in a virtual space, where there is no direct contact between the parties. The following characteristics can also be highlighted:

a) With respect to the aggressor or cyberbully:

1. *Anonymity* in cyberbullying is very easy to achieve through ICT, since by impersonating the victim the bully can use a false profile account on a social network or an email address created without ever being recognized, they can even impersonate the victim to insult other people and thus indirectly harm them.

2. The *capacity for transmission and repetition* of the cyberbullying action, including the number of victims that can be cyberbullied, is greater, since the same message can be sent to different people with just one click.

b) With respect to the victim:

It should be noted that the emotional damage suffered by the victim may be greater than that suffered in bullying, mainly due to the following aspects:

1. The aggressive abuse by the cyberbully is more prolonged, since what is published is difficult to control and even if it is erased there is always the fear that it may reappear at any time.
2. There is an added difficulty in terms of the ability to distance oneself from the bullying, since in this case it does not stop after school, but lasts permanently throughout the day and every day of the year.
3. The audience that is aware of cyberbullying is much wider and more difficult to control, because we are unaware of how far it can go beyond the victim's immediate environment and it can become unlimited.

## 4.2. Identifying the symptoms of cyberbullying

### 4.2.1. If the child is bullying

In cyberbullying minors, the following behaviors can generally be observed:

- They usually participate actively in forums and social networks without respecting the norms of netiquette, i.e., in a rude or aggressive manner, displaying negative behavior. This is the archetype of what is currently known in the online world as a "hater".

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- They are often present in communities with inappropriate content where participants enjoy sharing and commenting on violent material.
- They may have a mobile device that parents and teachers are unaware of.
- They are reluctant to have their parents or teachers supervise their online activity and when questioned about it react in an inordinately aggressive manner.
- They stay away from common areas and even hide to use Internet-connected devices, for example, while playing online games with other users.
- They often share violent content on their digital platforms and instant messaging groups.

## 4.2.2. If the child is the victim

In addition to the characteristic symptoms of bullying such as headaches, digestive problems, insomnia and any other type of drowsiness, as well as decreased academic performance and even absenteeism, as well as many others, are all symptoms of cyberbullying:

- Changes in the child's attitude towards Internet use.
- They stop posting content and comments on the Web or radically change the manner or subject matter of the material shared, when previously they were much more active.
- They suddenly close their accounts on social networks.
- They display a negative reaction or are reluctant to use Internet-connected devices.
- They are uncomfortable or frightened when receiving notifications on their mobile phone.
- They stop playing online games.

### 4.2.3. The witnesses

These are the other students who take part in the cyberbullying and can be the key to ending this problem, since their reactions to the humiliating statements of the cyberbully can influence the escalation of cyberbullying or, in contrast, help to eradicate it. In this regard the following should be taken into account:

1. The cyberbully needs spectators when they humiliate their victim. It has been proven that *likes* and comments or *posts* in support of publications where the victim is mocked and denigrated are a highly positive reinforcer of the bully's behavior. These *likes* and positive comments, even the passive or inactive attitude of the witnesses when it comes to putting an end to this situation, perpetuate cyberbullying. Often these attitudes are motivated by the fear of becoming the target of the cyberbully or for fear of being labeled as a snitch and often because they consider that it is a problem that does not concern them.
2. Conversely, and according to numerous studies, the intervention of a witness on behalf of the victimized child is essential in stopping the cyberbully from harassing the victim. But it should also be borne in mind that the intervention of a child who reacts by expressing their disagreement with the cyberbully's offensive comments and supporting the victim requires much more effort and commitment than in the opposite case.

In short, if the cyberbully does not feel supported and is instead urged to desist from their behavior with the situation being reproached from the outset, the abuse will cease in most cases. That is why it is necessary to work with students, so that they are made aware and sensitized to the harm caused by cyberbullying, and to put an end to this situation.

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Generally speaking, we can differentiate the following types of witnesses:

1. *The collaborator*: expressly supports the cyberbullying, making positive comments, or uploading images or *stickers* in which they laugh or applaud, etc.
2. *The reinforcer/cheerleader*: supports cyberbullying in a more subtle way, such as by *liking* offensive posts.
3. *The neutral party*: does nothing by tolerating the bullying.
4. *The defender*: supports the victim and condemns the cyberbully by expressing their disagreement or reporting the situation to a trusted adult.

## 4.3. Conflict situations in cyberbullying

- ⊗ Threatening, insulting or verbally assaulting a minor repeatedly on the Internet, through comments or messages in social network publications or *chats*.
- ⊗ Posting any type of audiovisual content such as photos, videos, memes, *stickers*, and so forth, of a minor on social networks, without their consent, with the aim of attacking and humiliating that minor.
- ⊗ Creating groups on social networks or forums exclusively to speak ill of and attack a minor.
- ⊗ Spreading defamatory and false rumors against a minor in order to attack them and turn everyone against them.
- ⊗ Excluding a classmate from an *online* school group in order to socially isolate them.
- ⊗ Making recordings of a classmate in which others provoke them with some kind of humiliating action, such as removing an article of clothing or tripping them up to later post it on social networks or online groups for equally humiliating purposes.
- ⊗ Causing third parties to contact the student repeatedly or en masse.
- ⊗ Intimidating a classmate through a hidden or unknown phone number or a simulated user name.



- ⊗ Blocking another minor's social networking accounts or changing their passwords so that they cannot use them or have someone else use them on their behalf.
- ⊗ Creating and sending polls through social networking groups that are intended to offend another classmate (e.g., who is the ugliest/fattest in the class?).
- ⊗ Registering the victim on web pages in which votes are taken on intelligence or other characteristics.

### Preventive advice (Cyberbullying)

- ✔ The student should block and remove from their social networks those people who may be bullying them and correctly configure their security and privacy options.
- ✔ Insist that they should never publish personal information, locations, photos, or any other material that could provide valuable information about them to bullies.
- ✔ Inform students that on social networks there is always an option to report published content, to inform those responsible for the *website* that regulations are being breached by bullies.
- ✔ You should never reply to a bully and if you do, you should never act like them, but should do so following the regulations of netiquette, in a respectful and polite way, so that the bully stops harassing you.
- ✔ If the bullying persists, the most appropriate option is to block the bully and tell a trusted adult.

## 4.4. Other situations of risk for children

### 4.4.1. Grooming

A set of deception techniques used by an adult to gain the trust of a minor, with the aim of obtaining a sexual benefit from the minor. It is a deception with a sexual purpose, where the *groomer's* real aim is to:

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- Obtain intimate content in which the minor appears.
- Achieve a way to talk about sex with the minor or to have sexual contact with them.

*Grooming* can culminate in a situation of school bullying and cyber-bullying, since the sexual content that the victim has previously shared with the *groomer* is sometimes spread by the groomer as a form of revenge through a group of which the students of the school are part.

Within *Grooming* there are 5 different phases:

1. *Friendship*: the *groomer* contacts the minor and tries to gain their trust.
2. *Relationship*: the minor begins to express themselves freely about intimate matters, since they consider the *groomer* to be their friend. In this phase, some conversations may begin to approach sexual topics.
3. *Beginning of the abuse*: the reciprocal sending of increasingly compromising content of a sexual nature begins. When the minor refuses, the blackmail or extortion phase may begin.
4. *Abuse and sexual aggression*: the grooming is aimed at achieving physical contact with the minor for sexual purposes.
5. *Post grooming or diffusion*: in addition to the damage caused in the previous phases, this can be amplified by the use of the sexual material obtained from the minor.

## PREVENTIVE ADVICE (GROOMING)

- ✔ On social networks, children should not become friends with people they do not know in real life. *They should pay close attention to the players they interact with online.*
- ✔ They should never share personal information with strangers.

- ✔ Tell them to deactivate their geolocation coordinates, otherwise strangers may be able to track them.
- ✔ When the *webcam* is not being used, it should always be covered, even when the device is turned off.
- ✔ Be extremely careful with *online* chats.
- ✔ They should never agree to requests where they are compromised, nor should they send any compromising material.
- ✔ Insist that they never give in to the *groomer's* blackmail and immediately cease any relationship with them.
- ✔ It is very important that they keep evidence of the bullying (photos, videos, recordings, screenshots).
- ✔ Blocking the person who is bullying you and immediately telling a trusted adult is vital in eradicating this situation.
- ✔ A report should be filed, whether or not the bullying has stopped.

#### 4.4.2. Sexting

This consists of sending and receiving material (images, photos, videos) of sexual content, made by the sender themselves, using a mobile phone or other electronic device.

This activity involves multiple risks, one of which is that the material may get into the hands of the minor's classmates through no fault of their own, which may give rise to both cyberbullying and school bullying, as well as possible blackmail.

#### 4.4.3. Sextortion

Also known as *sexual extortion*, it occurs when one or more persons threaten the minor with the distribution of sexual or intimate material, if they do not receive some kind of payment, which is usually money or favors of a sexual nature.

## PREVENTIVE ADVICE (SEXTING-SEXTORTION)

- ✔ Never take compromising photos or videos. Even if they do not send them to anyone, someone could intercept them, the devices where they are stored could be stolen, they could lose them or upload the material they have stored to social networks by mistake.
- ✔ They must take care of their online image and thereby their online reputation. They should think before sending anything, as they will then lose control over the material.
- ✔ They should never distribute compromising images, either of themselves or of third parties.
- ✔ If they receive compromising material from a minor, they should not forward it and they should delete it immediately. Disseminating child pornography is a crime.
- ✔ Insist that they communicate the facts to a trusted adult (family member, teacher, police or doctor).

### **4.4.4. Identity theft**

This consists of impersonating another person to achieve a benefit or advantage, such as for the purposes of cyberbullying a minor. In this way, with the intention of harming an individual, they impersonate them on social media and engage in offensive behavior in their name. This can be done in two ways:

1. Illegally accessing that person's digital account.
2. Creating a new fake profile using the identity data of the person they wish to impersonate.

#### PREVENTIVE TIPS (IDENTITY THEFT)

- ✔ Teach them to create secure and strong passwords (alphanumeric, symbols, lowercase and uppercase).
- ✔ They must know how to create a private profile and correctly configure the privacy and security options on social media networks.
- ✔ Remind them to keep their devices and apps updated.
- ✔ They should never tell anyone their personal passwords except their parents, nor should they store them or write them down.
- ✔ Warn them about the importance of not being watched while typing on the computer.
- ✔ Get them used to always closing all sessions when they finish using email or social media networks.
- ✔ Stress the use of a nickname for identifying themselves on social media and online games, avoiding their first and last name or year of birth.
- ✔ Insist on the need to install a good antivirus, anti-malware and anti-spam software on their electronic devices so that they are protected.
- ✔ If their identity has been stolen, they should tell a trusted adult, report the facts on the affected platform, as well as go to the Police and, if necessary, report this to the Spanish Data Protection Agency.

#### **4.4.5. Inappropriate content**

This is all the material that minors can access whose content is harmful to them because they are not mature and developed enough to understand it correctly.

Often children and young people intentionally and voluntarily look for this material through direct searches on the Internet, but many other times they can also be exposed to this material involuntarily and by

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chance, for example through video games or even through advertising on television or social networks.

Inappropriate content can be of two types:

1. *Illegal content*: this is that which the law does not allow, including child pornography and pedophilia, but also incitement to terrorism, provocation and incitement to commit hate crimes, the manufacture of weapons and explosive devices or drugs.
2. *Harmful content*: the law allows such content, but it is highly detrimental to the normal development of minors. For example, pornography between adults, material showing violence or promoting eating disorders (Pro-Ana and Pro-Mia pages), self-harming ideas, or viral videos about activities that are detrimental to health.

## PREVENTIVE ADVICE (INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT)

- ✔ Warn children about content that is not appropriate for their age.
- ✔ They should download material only from authorized official sites. Similarly, they should make online purchases from secure pages and never from places with public wifi.
- ✔ Emphasize the age guidelines on video games.
- ✔ Talk to them positively about parental control tools, which their parents can use to restrict access to this kind of content.
- ✔ Teach them to properly configure the security and privacy options on their devices and browsers, as well as to always have updated antivirus software installed when accessing the Internet.

## 4.5. Action guidelines to be transmitted to children

1. *Tell*: as soon as possible, go to a trusted adult (family member, teacher, police, doctor) who can help and protect you.

2. *Block*: if you have located the person who is bullying and bothering you, you should block them immediately on all platforms and digital devices.
3. *Collect*: save all those elements (photos, videos, screenshots) that can serve as evidence of the harassment you are suffering.
4. *Report*: both on social media and publicly in the appropriate institutions, providing all the evidence that proves the existence of the bullying.

If a teacher is aware of a situation of cyberbullying, they must take the appropriate measures, including reporting it to the school principal. The latter will be responsible for activating the protocols to that effect and for referring it to the competent public authorities in educational matters, who will be responsible for taking the corresponding disciplinary measures.

Finally, and according to the applicable legislation in each country or region, the behavior that results in cyberbullying may constitute a crime. It must therefore be reported to the public bodies responsible for receiving complaints, such as the courts or prosecutors' offices, as well as to law enforcement agencies.

As a model aimed at preventing and dealing with these situations, the Spanish National Police has a Citizen Participation Delegate<sup>3</sup>, a police expert who goes to schools to work within the framework of the *Master Plan for Coexistence and Improvement of Security in Schools and their Environments*, among which we can highlight the following:

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<sup>3</sup> A similar approach is taken in Portugal by the Public Security Police (*"Polícia de Segurança Pública"*) within the Safe School program (*"Escola Segura"*), which through its Safe School Program Teams (*"Equipas do Programa Escola Segura"*) promotes the surveillance of school areas and close contact with the entire educational community, responding to the various requests addressed to it, and promoting awareness and prevention actions in schools.

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- *Holding training and informative talks* aimed at young people, minors, teachers, and parents, paying special attention to the consequences of bullying on those who suffer it, as well as the responsibility of all to report and combat it, the prevention of security risks associated with new technologies and the use of social media networks. In particular, those related to bullying behavior, sexual harassment, also known as “*child grooming*”, or the dissemination of sexual content via mobile phones, known as “*sexting*”.
- *Raising awareness and guiding students* in terms of behavior that can lead to criminal or violent actions, promoting the values of responsibility, equality, respect and coexistence.
- *Facilitating tools for conflict prevention* and to avoid the risk of becoming victims of certain crimes (sexual abuse or aggression, bullying, access to particular Internet content, etc.).
- *Instilling the need to communicate or request help* from parents and teachers, regarding events that occur inside or outside the school, when the seriousness of the situation makes this advisable.
- *Improving their knowledge and confidence* in relation to the role of the Security Forces and the public service they provide to the community, as well as the different channels for communicating with them.

## 4.6. Tips for school action related to Cyberbullying and other risky behaviour

### 4.6.1. Action guidelines to be followed by teachers

In cases in which a situation of cyberbullying is presumed to exist, but in general in any type of victimisation among peers, three keys must be well balanced:



- *Determination*: cyberbullying can generate very dramatic, even extreme situations. It is the teacher's duty to activate the necessary mechanisms to confirm or abandon the suspicion.
- *Prudence*: on the Internet, situations can be very varied and, what is worse, they can appear to be one thing and really be something else. It is not difficult to make a mistake or misjudge a situation.
- *Calm*: indignation, frustration, impotence, anger... and so many other emotions will arise when faced with the injustice and cruelty of a situation of victimisation between peers. It is important to be calm enough to take the right steps at the right time.

Among the most common concrete recommendations are the following:

- If there is any suspicion that a situation of cyberbullying is occurring in the classroom, it should immediately be brought to the attention of the management team, who will decide whether to activate the general bullying protocol or, if it exists, the cyberbullying protocol. If it is finally activated, it should be reported to the corresponding educational inspectorate. When there is clear evidence of cyberbullying and the acts in which it occurs are so serious that they constitute a criminal offence, it can be reported to any police department or corresponding legal body.
- A teacher may confiscate a pupil's device, provided that this measure is provided for in the school's internal rules or this action is justified by the clear need to protect the rights of other pupils.
- Searching the content of a student's device is possible when the public interest prevails and whenever it is suspected that it has been used to harm the rights of other members of the school (students, teachers, staff). However, great caution is recommended in this respect, as failure to comply with the above would be an infringement of a fundamental right of the individual, such as the right to secrecy of communications.

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- The utmost care should be taken not to unnecessarily inconvenience the victim by, for example, exposing publicly a situation which, although it may not appear so, was known only to a small group.
- In the same vein, the priority should be to reduce the harm that the victim may be suffering, so it should be suggested to reduce their on-line exposure time at least temporarily, as well as to review their contact lists, apps and privacy preferences. It is also positive to explore different digital environments to look for possible harassment practices that may be taking place against the victim in question. Sometimes, it is possible to request the removal of harmful or humiliating content on a given platform by referring to the terms of use, and some countries have even made tools available to citizens so that harmful content can be removed from the Internet as soon as possible.
- Finally, it is important to save signs or evidence of the assaults or those involved in them, and to do so in the most appropriate way possible (screenshots, saving conversations, messages received or phone records) so that they could, if necessary, serve as electronic evidence in a hypothetical prosecution of the case.

## 4.6.2. Examples of action strategies

As indicated in the module “Misuse of connected digital technologies”, when there is the role of victim and antagonist, it is important that educational interventions have the pupil as the protagonist, so that he/she feels involved in the process of improvement and acceptance of the situation.

One of the forms of action would be through peer mediation, where pupils are trained to mediate between peers and to resolve a conflict peacefully under the supervision of responsible teachers. The mediators take a neutral position, where they let the parties express their opinions. This mediation can improve conflicts, restore relationships and improve coexistence.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL

### Workshop: “Omission is part of cyberbullying”

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To work on empathy with all the participants in a case of cyberbullying at school, paying special attention to the figure of the witnesses.

#### PREPARATION

In this workshop, a series of hypothetical situations of cyberbullying at school are developed, from which a wide range of generic questions are derived. In case the problem of cyberbullying really exists, it is recommended to use the approach of the concrete conflict, even adapting the questions to be asked if necessary.

#### REFLECTION

We reflect on the importance of working on empathy to prevent and put an end to cyberbullying.

*Empathy* is the ability we have to put ourselves in another person's shoes and thus be able to understand the feelings that person experiences as a result of the situation they are going through. Working on this ability allows us to carry out a personal analysis, through which we must be fully aware of the impact that our own actions and also the actions of others have on another person.

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The aim is to prevent those behaviours that may be the source of the other person's suffering.

In this process, *assertiveness* is also of great importance as a skill that allows us to adequately express our ideas and feelings to others. Assertive people are endowed with sufficient capacity to maintain and defend their opinion in any circumstance. All this means that, in a case of cyberbullying, it can become the key to its resolution, since, for example, if the victim is assertive, he/she will have the necessary resources to express and denounce correctly what the cyberbullying provokes; and, on the other hand, with respect to the witnesses, there would be a high probability that they would actively support the victim. The latter is very interesting, as cyberbullies often stop bullying when they perceive that others are against the cyberbullying.

This workshop aims to strengthen these two capacities, as well as to highlight the importance of the role of witnesses in the resolution of cyberbullying cases.

## PROCEDURE

- The classroom is divided into 3 different groups:
  - Perpetrators' group
  - Victim group
  - Witness group

- The approach consisting of a negative comment or behaviour typical of a cyberbullying situation is written or projected on the board.
- The following questions are posed to the group(s) specified below, *reminding the members of each group to respond as they think the group to which they belong would respond.*
- Each group should reach a consensus of answers among its members on the questions formulated and a spokesperson from each group will be in charge of presenting them to the rest of the group.

#### APPROACHES (EXAMPLES)

- Continuously posting comments on a classmate's profile such as: "Nobody likes you, you should leave our school".
- Recording a video in which you provoke a humiliating situation for a classmate, with the aim of making fun of him/her, or even attacking him/her and then uploading it on the Internet.
- Exclude a colleague from a chat, just because I don't like him/her, or create a chat exclusively to talk badly about him/her.
- Continually bullying a colleague by calling him/her from a hidden number or using third parties to threaten him/her.
- Creating a fake profile pretending to be a colleague to insult another in order to harm him/her.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Why would a person make such a comment/behaviour to another person? (**perpetrators**, **victims** and **witnesses**)

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2. Do you think someone deserves this kind of comment/behaviour? (**perpetrators**, **victims** and **witnesses**)
3. What if this comment was not made by that person, but was a victim of impersonation, how would you feel if you were a victim of impersonation? (**perpetrators**, **witnesses** and **victims**)
4. What is my first reaction to such a comment/behaviour? (**victims** and **witnesses**)
5. Would you be able to tell the perpetrator that you don't like this comment/behaviour? If you were not able to do so, what prevents you from doing so (fear, embarrassment, you think it would serve no purpose, etc.)? (**victims**)
6. Would you tell anyone else or would you keep quiet so that no one else knows what they are doing to you? If you did tell, who would you tell and why? If you would not tell anyone, how far do you think you would be able to go without asking for help (**victims**)?
7. Would you go as far as attacking the people who make this comment/behaviour in reaction to it? (**victims** and **witnesses**)
8. If the victim told you that he/she did not like the comment/behaviour and that it hurt him/her, would you stop? If no, why? (**perpetrators**)
9. When you make this comment/behaviour, do you seek approval from others? In what way or form do you recognise this approval and what do you like most about it? If you knew that you were not going to find recognition from others, would you still do this comment/behaviour? (**perpetrators**)
10. If you knew that the author would not make that comment/behaviour when he/she saw that I reacted negatively to it, would you do it or would you refrain? If I refrained, what would prevent me from acting? (**witnesses**)

11. To what extent do you think that your reaction can have a positive influence on the resolution of the bullying conflict? What do you think you should do to achieve this? (**witnesses**)
12. Do you think that this type of comment/behaviour could constitute a criminal offence and could be reported to the police, with the possibility of the perpetrators being held criminally liable for committing a crime? (**perpetrators**, **witnesses** and **victims**)

### CONCLUSIONS

- ✔ Discuss and analyse together the answers obtained from each group, in order to make them aware of the different opinions and attitudes that are formulated according to the roles adopted, emphasising the role of witness and its importance. In this way, the framework of cyberbullying at school is unravelled, so that they become aware of the different parts that make it up and adopt the empathetic attitude sought as a basis for resolving the conflict.
- ✔ Emphasise the importance of avoiding conflict between the different groups, including with the group of perpetrators.
- ✔ Take the opportunity to consider conflict resolution measures that are respectful of all parties.
- ✔ Finally, remind them that if they are unable to resolve the conflict, they should always ask for help from a trusted adult.





# 5. MISINFORMATION AND CRITICAL THINKING

PantallasAmigas

## 5.1. What can be considered misinformation?

In 2017, the Council of Europe report “Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking” defines and differentiates between two concepts of misinformation:

- *Disinformation* would be false information that has been deliberately created to harm a person, a social group, an organisation or a country.
- *Misinformation* is false information that has not been created with the intention of causing harm.

On the other hand, we are talking about *misinformation* when information with some basis in reality is used to cause harm to a person, an organisation or a group. We can complete concepts with a key characteristic of each of them:

- Disinformation is often planned, orchestrated and equipped with the means to achieve its harmful purpose.

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- In the case of misinformation, in addition to having no harmful intent, those who disseminate it are generally unaware that it is misinformation.
- Malicious use of information is characterised by its unethical use.

It is worth mentioning at this point that the use of the term “fake news” to refer to false information is discouraged, as it attributes the status of news to something that is not.

UNESCO uses the concept of *disinformation* to refer to deliberate, often planned and coordinated attempts to confuse or manipulate people by feeding them dishonest information. It is considered particularly dangerous because it is often organised, resourced and uses advanced techniques and technologies to increase its effectiveness and reach.

There are many resources and strategies that can provoke a certain form of disinformation, for example:

- Satire and parody.
- Headlines designed as clickbait headlines.
- Misleading use of captions, visuals or statistics.
- Genuine content that is shared out of context.
- Spoofed content (when journalists’ names or logos are used when there is no connection to them).
- Manipulated and fabricated content.

## 5.2. Risks and consequences of misinformation

The ease with which content is produced and the speed at which it is replicated and viralised in a digital, global, frenetic and interconnected society has made so-called *information disorders* (disinformation

and misinformation) the subject of concern because of the serious consequences they can trigger.

The creation of disinformation has become so democratised and automated that there are free websites that offer the possibility of creating a fictitious piece of content with the appearance of reality.

Responsible digital citizenship must be exercised from a participation driven and based on truthful information, and therefore requires a combative stance against the spread of disinformation.

Identifying, unmasking and, in general, combating erroneous content and information, whether intentionally or unintentionally produced, becomes a personal challenge and a collective need, and therefore a civic duty.

Some of the effects caused by misinformation are the following:

- Creation of bewilderment and confusion, making discernment and positioning difficult.
- Manipulation of personal decisions, directly or indirectly.
- Reputation or discrediting of persons, entities or institutions through the manipulation of perception and opinion about them.
- Generation of economic benefits.
- Conditioning of public opinion to create a state of opinion that can benefit a certain ideology or interest group.

On a more individual level, the person who is affected by disinformation can suffer these consequences, which are not negligible:

- Loss of time and increased distraction without any benefit.

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- Manipulation and consequently lack of freedom or accuracy when acting or giving opinions.
- Involuntary inclusion in the chain of diffusion.
- Legal consequences as a result of participation in the dissemination of disinformation that may have had a negative impact on third parties.

## 5.3. Media and information literacy

*Media and Information Literacy* (MIL) can be defined as a process of building knowledge and competences (skills and attitudes) that empowers individuals to understand the functions of the media and other information providers, to critically evaluate media content and to make informed decisions as users and producers of information and knowledge. In today's society where the Internet plays a central role, it is appropriate to include digital literacy in MIL.

Empowering people through MIL is one of the most important prerequisites for fostering equitable access to information and knowledge and for promoting free, independent and pluralistic media and information systems.

UNESCO and the OECD have for years been drawing attention to the need to educate from an early age for critical and intelligent interaction with the media (media literacy). Specifically, UNESCO sets as a requirement for inclusive, knowledge-based education the development, from the earliest ages, of the competences and skills that make up Media and Information Literacy (including Digital Literacy, specific to digital media). This literacy provides people with the autonomy and ability to function effectively in technological, digital and communication environments and, consequently, enables them to freely and fully exercise their citizenship.

MIL focuses on five core competences referred to as “the 5Cs: Understanding, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Intercultural Awareness and Citizenship”. Thus, following UNESCO’s criteria, the competence to think critically in order to receive and elaborate media products is included within the MIL and, consequently, promotes the ability to combat the consumption, creation and distribution of untruthful or manipulated content that can generate confusion, misinformation and even harm.

## 5.4. Critical thinking

The fight against disinformation is a matter of capacity, but above all it is a matter of attitude. It is about knowing, but above all it is about doubting. It is more a matter of watching and listening than seeing and hearing.

*Critical thinking* is one of the Life Skills defined by the WHO in 1993 as “those skills necessary for appropriate and positive behaviour that enable us to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”.

The word “critical” comes from the Greek and its meaning is similar to separate, distinguish, judge. Critical thinking helps to distinguish the good from the bad, the just from the unjust, the true from the false. Critical thinking is developed by exercising it first of all with oneself. It is essential to dismantle, through logical argumentation and questioning, prejudices, preconceived ideas and cognitive biases.

According to Peter A. Facione’s research paper “Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts” critical thinking includes:

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- Curiosity about a wide range of topics.
- Concern about becoming and remaining a well-informed person.
- Alertness to opportunities to use critical thinking.
- Confidence in the processes of reasoned questioning.
- Self-confidence in one's own ability to reason.
- Open-mindedness with respect to divergent world views.
- Flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions.
- Understanding of other people's opinions.
- Fairness in assessment.
- Recognition and honest confrontation of one's own bias, prejudice, stereotype or self-centred tendency.
- Prudence in withholding, making or altering judgements.
- Willingness to reconsider and revise views when honest reflection suggests that change is warranted.

Approached procedurally, critical thinking involves at least five key actions:

- Interpretation of information to clarify its meaning.
- Validating the credibility of information in terms of its origin, coherence and intentionality or possible effects as well as one's own prior knowledge.
- Questioning data and information both explicit and implicit and contrasting it by defining alternatives.
- Deepening by obtaining more data but also by identifying unknowns.
- Self-assessment by reviewing one's own mental process with the information to question, confirm or revise the reasoning and the final results obtained.

The question now arises as to what extent the outcome of the performance of these actions is related to intellectual capacity. It can be said that there is a logical correlation between intelligence (in terms

of that which is measurable by tests of the type that measure IQ) and critical thinking. The relationship seems obvious because assessing information correctly requires grasping, processing and understanding it, and because people with higher IQs are more resistant to the influence of cognitive biases. However, critical thinking also depends on other cognitive abilities not measured by intelligence tests and on certain personality traits.

On the other hand, research has identified three characteristics of people that promote critical thinking:

- Curiosity or openness, which invites open-ended exploration.
- The desire to find the truth, which acts as a motivation to engage in the effort.
- Intellectual humility, which is vital as critical thinking involves doubting other people but above all oneself. Critical thinking is an attitude that begins with the assumption that one does not know.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that developing critical thinking involves stimulating high-level reasoning skills which, according to studies and research, provide advantages in other facets of life:

- It favours better decisions.
- Reduces the frequency of negative events.
- Improves academic performance.
- Increases efficiency in occupations requiring analytical skills.

In short, it can be concluded that:

- It is necessary to develop in minors a critical attitude towards the digital world by questioning information, people and services but also the ecosystem itself and its agents, as well as their personal

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behaviour, often characterised by abusive or compulsive use, on the other hand.

- Activating critical thinking is not only a necessity imposed by disinformation and misinformation but also becomes an opportunity to improve personal and professional life, which explains its inclusion in the WHO's list of life skills.

## 5.5. Bias and Emotion

The success of disinformation has a lot to do with the reaction of the people who are exposed to it through the screens. This reaction goes through our brains and our hearts, and is subject to reasoning and emotions.

The reasoned interpretation of information sometimes occurs unconsciously and is greatly affected by cognitive biases. A *cognitive bias* is a systematic misinterpretation of available information that influences the way we process thoughts, make judgements and decisions. Cognitive biases have a wide variety of origins: cultural issues, social influences, emotional or ethical motivations, simplification of information processing, distortions when retrieving memories or recalling, etc.

Biases are like shortcuts that each brain has developed to simplify problems and facilitate decisions. They are the result of the evolutionary need to selectively filter stimuli to relieve the brain of some information analysis tasks. However, they can also have an undesirable effect and become an obstacle to identifying misinformation. Some examples are given below:

- The *blind spot* bias makes it difficult to identify one's own biases, despite knowing about them, even though we see them in other people.



- The *confirmation bias* induces us to overvalue information that fits with our own beliefs (values, ideologies, prejudices) or, failing that, with the predominant beliefs, and to unconsciously ignore information that does not coincide or is contrary.
- The *familiarity bias or counterproductive effect* implies that the greater the frequency of exposure to a given piece of information, regardless of its veracity, the more likely it is to be believed to be true.
- The *social interaction validation* bias leads a person to do what others do, thus reinforcing something as primal as the feeling of belonging to the group.
- The *visual superiority effect* comes about because the brain processes an image up to 60,000 times faster than text. Moreover, we remember 80% of what we see, 20% of what we read and 10% of what we hear. Content accompanied by images is consumed and shared much more than content without images.
- *Motivated reasoning* is an emotionally tinged bias and involves the unconscious tendency to condition information processing to conclusions that conform to some purpose or objective.

*Emotions*, for their part, do not help to combat disinformation either, because our thinking is not only rational but also emotional. When information provokes a certain emotion in us, it is possible that this emotion conditions the analysis of the information and then leads to a rational justification of what has been concluded.

There are emotions that are particularly difficult to manage and cause us to lose control, such as, for example, anger, compassion, morbidity, curiosity, fear and urgency. Disinformation appeals to them because the emotional component of our thinking will encourage us to share it.

## 5.6. Filter bubbles and echo chambers

The concept of *filter bubble* refers to the fact that the information that the different services we use on the Internet (search engines, social networks, entertainment providers, online shops...) offer us is limited by our own characteristics. Technology makes it possible to personalise the information in such a way that it is presented to us according to the relevance or importance that it would presumably have for each individual.

Bubble filters, among other things, limit our ability to discover and the result of our curiosity, as well as the opportunity to question or delve deeper. They are an obstacle to critical thinking and, consequently, allies of disinformation.

With regard to media consumption, the *echo chamber* theory refers to the fact that if there is a preference for like-minded people and information, echo chambers will form, i.e. empty spaces where our own ideas bounce off. This theory would imply that digital technologies do not expand our choices but limit our possibilities. Perhaps this can be the case when we are not aware of it and do not activate mechanisms to enrich our sources, even with influences and ideas that, a priori, are contrary.

## 5.7. Strategies to deal with misinformation

In order to educate a responsible, critical and active generation in the face of disinformation, there are several lines of intervention to encourage.

## 1. Pause and consider the option of not sharing

We must be aware that sharing without checking is not a gesture of generosity, but rather something that is in fact unsupportive. Nothing should be shared without first taking the time to validate it. If one does not have that time, if one does not want the capacity to undertake sufficient verification of the information, the only responsible alternative is simply not to share.

The reasons for not sharing without verification can be summed up in three:

- Compulsive or urgent sharing of information is more likely to be untrue. If it is considered very important to disseminate, it is also important to take the time to verify it.
- Disinformation often causes harm to other people or interests. By contributing to its dissemination, you also take responsibility for its negative effects.
- Participating, expressing opinions, defending ideas, trying to help others... these are citizens' rights and obligations. However, disseminating unverified information is reckless and unethical.

Finally, it is important to remember that if information has been disseminated and it is later found to be false, means should be put in place to deny it, taking the time to try to compensate for the erroneous action.

## 2. Awareness of the effects and personal responsibility

Visualising, discovering the negative consequences and our responsibility for them should serve to curb our participation, consciously or not, in the chains of disinformation.

All too often the focus is on identifying and combating hoaxes and disinformation by enabling the skills to do so at an early age. However, it is perhaps just as important, if not more important, to put the emphasis on motivating, raising awareness and giving reasons for them to adopt a critical and responsible attitude. It is not enough to know how to do, it is necessary to want to do, to have sufficient motivation.

### **3. Stimulate critical thinking in a broad sense**

In addition to developing the ability to analyse and evaluate information, deduction and conclusion, it is important to propose activities that help them to doubt themselves, their own approaches, so that they learn to limit the hasty and vehement emission of their opinions or value judgements.

### **4. Knowing in order to combat the influence of biases and emotions**

Fighting misinformation involves a conscious and constant struggle against the limitations that biases and emotions impose on us unconsciously. Therefore, the fight against misinformation begins with knowing ourselves better, knowing what biases we have and can come into play when evaluating it and what emotions we feel when faced with it.

For example, confirmation bias is combated by questioning to a greater extent the information that most closely matches what we think because, although we are endowed with intelligence, we are predisposed not to change our minds.

## 5. Identify disinformation strategies and motivations

Knowing your opponent is always an asset in combat. For example, it is good to know that disinformation exploits biases and emotions, and further progress could be made by trying to identify how it does so.

It is also useful to know the motivations that can lead to disinformation being created. Sometimes it is pure fun, created as a challenge or to generate chaos for the sake of entertainment. Sometimes it is purely for economic or ideological purposes.

## 6. Knowing and using tools to cross-check information

At the end of the validation process of a given piece of information, there is always concrete data (including metadata, textual information, in image, audio or video format) that must be checked. This task must be supported by one or more of these capabilities:

- Efficient search for information on different web platforms or social networks.
- Access to reliable and relevant sources of information.
- Knowledge and handling of applications and services for quick verification of images and videos.
- Meticulous observation of information, without ignoring the use of logic and deduction.

Depending on each case, complementary or alternative procedures can be activated. For example, there are entities that are dedicated to identifying misinformation in such a way that it is possible to access their information systems (databases or websites) to check whether something has already been identified as a hoax.

## 5.8. Ten steps to take against misinformation

To avoid sharing something that may not be true, it is recommended to follow these steps as a checking procedure:

1. Verify the source of the information. If you do not know it or it is not identified, be suspicious.
2. Examine the appearance: bad spelling and strange or very striking designs can be a cause for suspicion.
3. Be cautious also when the information comes from someone you trust, family or friends.
4. Analyse all the information, not just the headline. Beware of information or images taken out of context.
5. Pay attention to images or videos. They may be misrepresented or not correspond to the event or moment they pretend to be associated with.
6. Compare the information with other reliable sources and be suspicious if you cannot find it.
7. Be wary of information that gives true information in order to camouflage false information.
8. If the information generates a feeling of anger, concern or urgency, be alert. It is often a strategy used to make you react without thinking.
9. News or information that is too good or too surprising is also often a way of hiding disinformation.
10. Identify humour and satire, don't confuse it with information.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL

### Disinformation

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To deepen in the intentionality and possible purposes of disinformation.
- To become aware of the importance of emotions in the multiplying effect of disinformation.
- To understand how biases influence objectivity in the analysis of information.

#### PROCEDURE

Estimated duration of the activity: 40-50 minutes.

#### *Step 1*

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 people and ask each group to create a piece of malicious information for each of these four objectives:

- Objective 1: to make a politician lose votes.
- Objective 2: to create opinion against the compulsory use of face masks in open spaces.
- Objective 3: try to prevent the Canary Islands from being chosen as the next holiday destination.
- Objective 4: to create doubts about the safety of covid-19 vaccines.

Each news item should have a headline and a description of the photograph that would accompany it, as well as details of the emotions

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(anger, curiosity, compassion, fear, urgency...) and biases (confirmation, familiarity, validation of social interaction...) that it would appeal to in order to be shared widely.

## *Step 2*

For each objective, each of the groups will present the piece of disinformation created and their strategy for it. At the same time as they do so, the relationship of emotions and biases used for each objective will be noted down in a matrix.

## *Step 3*

Finally, an analysis of the matrix will be carried out and a reflection will be made on whether there are emotions and biases especially related to one or other types of objectives.

## REFLECTION / CONCLUSIONS

The following ideas should be made clear throughout the activity:

- Disinformation is always targeted and leads to unfair, exaggerated or undesirable effects.
- Emotions are often allies of disinformation because they hinder rational analysis and, on many occasions, generate an immediate reaction that leads us to share it.
- Biases can make us unintentionally, and due to external or internal causes, consider information to be true when it is not.



# 6. UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

Stiftung Digitale Chancen

## 6.1. Introduction

Adults live in a society that is defined by a set of norms and values that govern our day-to-day activities. But, in many cases, school-age children are not aware of those norms that are designed for and by them.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the subject of this module, is one of the legally binding international instruments for the guarantee and protection of human rights. It contains specifications addressed to governments to enable the well-being of children and to protect them from injustice and exploitation, and it is within their competence how to implement it.

**Article 42 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** says: “States undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by effective and appropriate means, to adults and children alike”.

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With this mandate, the State has the responsibility to situate, and bring the issue of children's rights closer to society. Therefore, school teachers, as civil servants in the service of the state or as professionals in the private sphere, have the mission to deal with children's rights and to address them in their classes in the most appropriate way.

Addressing and implementing children's rights requires a different attitude and approach, especially on the part of adults. Sometimes it can be uncomfortable, as you have to adapt the content and understand children's reactions, but, in the end, it is worthwhile to see the world from the children's perspective, as this helps to broaden adults' view of the need for children's rights.

Therefore, we believe that these factors will have a positive impact on students' awareness to think not only about their duties as learners, but also about their rights, which, we believe, can have a positive impact on their school achievement and prevent early school leaving.

The module 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' is intended to support this process: providing an introduction to children's rights and enable teachers to gain an initial orientation in that field. Furthermore the module issues children's rights in the digital world. For specific pedagogical work, various materials are provided in the corresponding appendix, as well as references for further reading.

## 6.2. History of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Until recent times, the child was regarded as the property of his parents or father. They determined his life, his education and his labor; the child owed obedience. The children's rights movement owes much pioneering work to Eglantyne Jebb, a British woman and founder of the Save the Children Fund. Alarmed by the catastrophic situation of refugee children in the Balkan countries and in Russia shortly after the First World War, Eglantyne Jebb drafted a charter for children, the Children's Charter. She sent this to the League of Nations in Geneva, saying, "I am convinced that we should lay claim to certain rights of children and work for the all-inclusive recognition of these rights." The Charter was adopted by the General Assembly of the League of Nations on September 24, 1924, and became known as the 'Geneva Declaration'. It had no legally binding force.

Immediately after the Second World War, there was talk of having the 'Geneva Declaration' recognized by the United Nations with a few adjustments. But the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, dominated the debate. The Declaration of Human Rights does contain certain statements in favor of children, especially regarding their protection. But a new Declaration of the Rights of the Child was not adopted by the United Nations General Assembly until November 20, 1959. Since then November 20 has been known as Children's Rights Day. The declaration contains concrete rights such as the right to a name, nationality or free education. However, it is hardly more binding than the Geneva Declaration of 1924.

In 1979 the Year of the Child was proclaimed and in 1980 Poland submitted a draft Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was essentially

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based on the 1959 Declaration and formed the working basis for the elaboration of the final version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On November 20, 1989, 30 years after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and ten years after the International Year of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the “UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,” was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It was opened for signature on January 26, 1990. 61 states signed it on the first day, then one month after the twentieth ratification, it entered into force on September 2, 1990. In the meantime, all the countries of the world have signed the Convention and all of them - with the exception of the USA - have ratified it.

## 6.3. About UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

According to the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child, a *child* means any person under the age of 18 years.

### 6.3.1. Structure of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an agreement under international law. All treated things are laid down in individual paragraphs, the so-called articles, as in a legal text. The whole document is divided into several parts: After the preamble, there are three parts: Part I contains actual articles concerning all living conditions of children, Parts II and III contain the regulations for the monitoring of children’s rights by a UN committee as well as the formalities for the signing and entry into force of the Convention. The Rights of children were written down in 41 articles. Further 14 articles describe statutory provisions for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### 6.3.2. Guiding Principles of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has defined general principles that shape the character of the Convention and play a leading role in realising all the rights: Non-discrimination (Art. 2, para 1), the primacy of the best interests of the child (Art. 3, para. 1), the right to life survival and development (Art. 6) and the right to participation (Art. 12).

*Non-discrimination* means that every child, regardless of language, religion or skin color, regardless of whether they have a disability or not, and regardless of their residence status, has exactly the same rights. For example, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child with status of being a refugee is entitled to the same quality of medical care as a child with resident status.

The *primacy of the best interests of the child* means that the best interests of the child must be taken into account as a primary consideration in every decision affecting children - for example, in the construction of a new school or in decisions by a family court.

From the *right to life survival and development* follows, for example, that all children have the same opportunities for a successful life and thus a right to have possible educational disadvantages caused by origin compensated for in daycare centers, schools or through special support.

The *right to participation* means that the opinions of children and young people must be heard in all decisions concerning their affairs - for example, the construction of a playground or the expansion of the youth center.

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Following the guiding principles of the UN Convention of Children's rights, the individual rights can be summarized in three groups: Rights of Protection, Rights of Provision and Rights of Participation.

- *Rights of Protection:* This Articles issues the special needs of protection of children. That means the protection of children from physical and mental violence, abuse, neglect, economic exploitation and drugs. Furthermore the States undertake to provide special protection for children at war, e.g. from kidnapping and child trafficking.

*Articles: 19-22, 30, 32-38*

- *Rights of Provision:* These include the rights to health care, education and adequate living conditions, and the right of a personal identity and a nationality.

*Articles: 23-29, 7, 8*

- *Rights of Participation:* These include, for example, the right to freedom of expression and hearing of the child's opinion, the right to free access to information and media. The Convention even goes one step further: children have a right to get information that is appropriate for them. The right of the child to leisure time and participation in cultural and artistic also belongs to that group of rights.

*Articles: 12-17, 31*

## 6.4. Children's rights in a digital world

The digital shift in our society offers opportunities for learning, play, health, communication and participation, but risks to children's safety, privacy, mental health and well-being are also emerging. (Livingston et al (2018), page 5) The digital world have heightened the potential impact of existing forms of threats and risks, e.g. Children's exposure to disturbing or potentially harmful content on websites and online

forums and blogs, Proliferation of child sexual abuse images and materials, increased levels of harm for the victims and increased levels of profits for criminal enterprises, development of virtual networks of individuals whose principal interest lies in child sexual abuse or child trafficking and other forms of exploitation and so on.

So there is no question about the issue of protection of children in the digital world and to raise awareness among families, adults, social institution, governments and economies for Rights of the Child in the digital world as well. It is a mission for all of us to guarantee that rights and a safe spaces of growing up, but a special one for relatives of children and their caregivers.

Since the enactment of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, the world has changed and the authors of the convention wasn't aware about the development of "internet" which happened at the same time. Therefore in April 2016 the Council of Europe adopted the so-called Sofia Strategy for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Next to aspects like equal opportunities, participation, a life free from violence and child-friendly justice it also encompasses children's rights in the digital environment.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore some articles was restated to the necessities of the digital world and some articles have to extend their scope. In the following, and without wishing to be exhaustive, we highlight those articles of the Convention that are most relevant to the scope of this guide to help teachers understand the extent of their adaptation to children's digital environment.

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<sup>4</sup> Véase <https://childrens-rights.digital/projekt/> [Consulta: 3 de diciembre de 2021].

ARTICLE 3

*Children have the right of protection and care which is necessary for their well-being. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.*

In case of the digital world that means on the one site appropriate technical provisions must be implemented and on the other site children need to be empowered to protect themselves. “It is the duty of parents and pedagogues in educational institutions to promote the empowerment of children, while governments have to provide the legal framework and preconditions”.<sup>5</sup>

ARTICLE 13

*The freedom for children of expression include the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.*

That right is valid in online environment, too. But the scope of information disseminated online is not assessable for children. “For children to not be exposed to unreasonable risks, while retaining their right to unrestricted freedom of expression and information, the digital environment must provide mechanisms of protection that take into account children's age and evolving capabilities”<sup>6</sup>.

5 Véase <https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/> [Consulta: 3 de diciembre de 2021].

6 Véase <https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/> [Consulta: 3 de diciembre de 2021].



ARTICLE 15

*Children have the right to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.*

No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The digital environment offers special opportunities for participation and sharing in cultural life and play, as well as for exercising the right to associate and assemble. States should cooperate with other actors to provide children with access to all activities that promote their participation, inclusion, digital citizenship and resilience. They should also ensure that these activities do not expose children to undue control and surveillance.

ARTICLE 16

*No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.*

*The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.*

That article becomes a very important with regard to issues like sharing pictures of babies or children without possibility for child to prevent it or economic model of offering apps and digital content without paying money but personal data. This regulation forces services in the internet to offer reporting options if unlawful situations occur.

## ARTICLE 17

*The child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.*

The digital world facilitates new types of discrimination, e.g. cyberbullying or hate speech, which are spread widely via social media and thereby have the potential to multiply the effects of discrimination<sup>7</sup>. The protection of well-being and from injurious material or information of children should be guaranteed by development of appropriate guidelines.

## ARTICLE 28

*Children have the right of education.*

Schools in nowadays have to address topics and content related to the digital world. Furthermore they have to create a learning environment which empower children to develop 21st century skills. “Children should learn how to make competent use of content appropriate for their objectives and needs, and they should gain the skills to live safely and freely in the digital world. Here, parents and educators should provide competent, responsible and trustful support”<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> cf. <https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/>

### ARTICLE 31

*Children's right of playing, recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and participation in cultural life and the arts should be respected and promote by the states.*

This will be crucial with regard of digital development: A huge amount of possibilities of playing, of being creative and of participation evolving in the internet or related to digital content. "The right to play is important for developing social skills and growing up healthy. The digital world must be designed as a safe and appropriate place for exercising this right"<sup>9</sup>.

### ARTICLE 32

*Children's Right of being protected from economic exploitation is next to other content written down in that article. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure that right.*

Though to development of internet, different economic models evolve: children can use digital contents, apps, social networks without costs but with their personal data, some digital games allow to get a level up or getting necessary items only while watching advertising videos, buying digital devices means a decision to an exclusive offer of applications and so on. Children must be protected from falling into economic dependency.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://childrens-rights.digital/einstieg/>

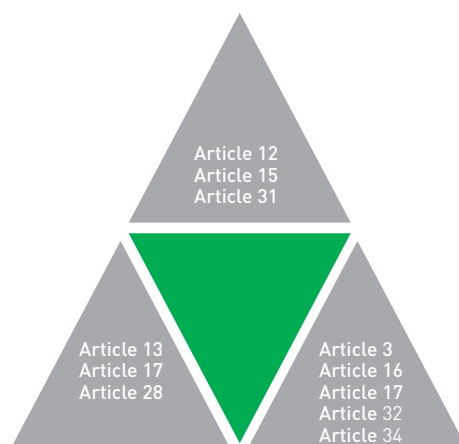
ARTICLE 34

*To protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.*

The misuse of pictures of children in the internet or forms of extortion evolving next to development of the internet. It 's easy to get in contact with children, pretending to be younger and to ask for pictures or other things. Perpetrators have different strategies to force children not to tell caregivers what they experienced in the internet. This could be forms of extortion, forcing children in dependence and so on.

This different articles, which get a special attention according to question of how to guarantee children's rights in the digital world can be issued by three strategies: Protect children with appropriate regulations and guidelines, empower children to make the right decisions of their need, practicing participation with children to become them as responsible citizens.

This three strategies should be addressed by caregivers and educational institutions like school, to enable children, to know and to use their rights.



## 6.5. Children`s rights in pedagogical work

Children must be able to experience their rights everywhere in their everyday lives: in their families, in daycare facilities, and especially in school. One step further: taking children seriously means seeing them as owners of their rights, informing them about their rights and involving them in the realization of their rights. But therefore it's not enough to know only the children`s rights. It must also be considered which conditions must be created so that children are able to use their rights.

The institutions in which children are living, be guests, where they learn and play must create conditions that enable children to make use of their rights. In the case of school that could mean sustainably anchor children`s rights in school along smaller events, action, project days that starts a discussion about children`s rights in school. With these measures the awareness for children`s rights will raise.

The next step would be to make them as premise of the school`s actions and attitudes. Being aware and be sensitized it's a good move to develop a mission statement in which well-being is taken to ensure children`s rights. (Portmann, 2010).

## 6.6. References

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Website childrens rights digital: <https://childrens-rights.digital/index.cfm>

## ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL

Children's Right can be issued in different lessons in schools:

- In lessons of national language the children can read a child friendly version of the UN Convention or write their own articles, reflection about it.
- In lessons of social studies the articles can be discussed and furthermore the differences of the situation of children's all over the world.
- In lessons of Art the children can create pictures and collage which issues children's rights.
- In history lessons the history of human rights and the UN Convention can be retraced.

To issue Children`s Rights in school different materials is offered for educators, e.g. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/guidance-assemblies-lessons/know-your-rights-child-rights-education-core-materials/>

To start in field of Children`s Rights a recommendation is to proceed on an equal footing. What means, to see children as experts for their own issues. The following examples work with that approach.

### *Methodsheets 1 'About the Rights of the Child'*

With 'About Rights of the Child' the students follow the development of children rights from the beginning and understand the development.

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## *Methodsheets 2 'Provision'*

Children's deal with the question of what they need to feel healthy and fit. Educators will see, that children best know what is good for them.

## *Methodsheets 3 'Participation'*

Children learn to know, what participation is and feels like. They understand, that along the right to participate there is a responsibility of being informed.

## *Methodsheets 4 'Protection'*

Children will be asked to do some research about violence against children. Educators will have the chance to get an insight of what children define and understand as violence against children.

## *Methodsheets 5 'Against Cyberbullying'*

To empower children against cyberbullying it's crucial to talk about. 'Against Cyberbullying' offers a creative way to deal with that issue.

A school taking children's rights seriously into account and issuing the rights in regular manner creates a safer school environment and empowering children and youth. This factors will therefore reduce early school leaving.

Below, you can find out how to carry out each of these activities with the information described in the worksheets.



## METHODSHEET

### Methodsheets 1: 'About the Rights of the Child'

#### PRESENTATION

This method is suitable as an introduction to the topic of the "Convention on the Rights of the Child". It provides an opportunity to discuss the origin of the Convention and the general declarations.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will follow the development of children's rights from their origin, with an emphasis on the protection of children.

#### PREPARATION

Different things which should be arranged in a sitting circle:

- Slice of bread.
- Band-aid or first aid kit.
- School book.
- Identity card.
- Ball.
- Bottle of water.

#### PROCEDURE

Students stand in a closed circle with the materials inside. Explain to the students that after the experiences of the

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two great world wars of the last century, almost all the countries of the world have come together to create peace in the world and to support each other. At regular meetings of heads of state and government, they have often spoken of children and young people in particular and their need for protection. They have therefore established rights for children that should always and everywhere apply to all children in the world, so that they do not have to suffer the wars of adults.

Ask the students if they have any ideas about how the objects in the centre of the circle might relate to these rights.

Some possible answers might be:

- Slice of bread = always have food, don't go hungry.
- Band-aid = help in case of need and in case of injury or illness.
- Textbook = to learn to read, write and calculate.
- Identity card = to have a name, to know when you were born and who your parents are.
- Ball = to be able to play/have places to play.
- Water bottle = having drinking water/not having to die of thirst.

Source: adapted and translated from "Kinderrechte.kinderleicht" ([https://shop.dkhw.de/de/index.php?controller=attachment&id\\_attachment=47](https://shop.dkhw.de/de/index.php?controller=attachment&id_attachment=47), Germany, page 4, Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk, 2017).

## Methodsheets 2: "Provision - Children's right of health"

### PRESENTATION

Every child has the right to grow up healthy. States, as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, must do everything in their power to prevent disease or, in the case of existing health problems, to ensure that children are well cared for. In this regard, there is a need to warn and inform about how tobacco, alcohol and medicines are particularly dangerous for children's still developing bodies.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The pupils address the question of what they need to feel healthy and fit. With the help of the exercise they learn about the right to health (art. 24), the right to the satisfaction of the child's basic needs (art. 27) and protection against addictive substances (art. 33).

### PREPARATION

- Prints with silhouettes.
- Magazines to cut out.
- Scissors and glue.
- Coloured pens.

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PROCEDURE

Ask students to draw on the silhouettes what they need to feel fit and healthy. They can also use the pictures in the magazines.

When finished, ask students to present their findings. Discuss children's rights to provision with the students:

- Why are they necessary?
- Who should guarantee them?

### Methodsheets 3: 'Participation – Student's conference'

#### INTRODUCTION

In all matters concerning children, their opinion must be heard, taken seriously and considered. But participation is not so easy. You have to be informed, have your own opinion and, above all, learn to be willing to compromise in order to be able to respect the opinions of others, to take them seriously and to take them into account.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students learn to know what it is and what it feels like to participate. They understand that along with the right to participate comes the responsibility to be informed. With the help of this exercise they will learn about the consideration of the will of the child (art. 12), the right to freedom of expression and information (art. 13), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 14), and freedom of association and assembly (art. 15).

#### PREPARATION

- Writing cards.
- Pens.
- Watch.
- Glue or tape.

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- Invitation to all relevant participants: children, teachers, parents, other staff.

## PROCEDURE

Form a circle of chairs. Initially choose a single topic for the agenda. When you choose it, make sure that it does not contain too much potential for conflict. A good topic to practise participation for the first time is the organisation of the school closing party.

At the conference, everyone has an equal voice. There should be a conference leader and a note-taker. In the first few sessions it would be good if the students could be supported in these roles. It is important to agree on some rules for the conference, for example: let them say their opinions, don't interfere, point out when someone wants to say something, don't laugh at other people's opinions.

The next step is to draw up an agenda to help ensure that everyone is talking about the same topic. There should never be more than three agenda items per meeting. Otherwise, the meeting becomes too long. For each agenda item, a stick figure is drawn on a card. The three cards (for three agenda items) are placed in the centre of the circle of chairs or at a visible height on the walls of the group room. The participants decide how long each item can be discussed (5 minutes is recommended at the beginning).

Another learner is given the task to measure the time (large hourglasses are recommended) and to mark the end of the agreed time.

The results of the discussions are recorded in writing and in pictures. The conference leader writes down the result, reads it back to the students and asks for approval of the decision. The student recorder records it again with a picture. Both are converted into a resolution together with the agenda item card on a piece of paper and placed clearly visible in the group room. In this way, everyone remembers the project and, at the same time, is informed about the status of the project.

## Methodsheets 4: "Protection - Daily violence"

### INTRODUCTION

Every day there are reports on television or on the Internet about acts of violence, abuse and exploitation of children. The students are asked to follow the reports and collect some examples.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students learn that violence against children is forbidden. But violence has different facets. The students deal with the understanding of that differences and possibilities of protection. With help of the exercise they get to know the 'Protection from violence, ill-treatment, neglect' (art 19), 'protection against economic exploitation' (art 32), 'protection against sexual abuse' (art 35), 'protection against other exploitation' (art 36).

### PREPARATION

Worksheet or digital pinboard, where students can stick on their findings (headlines, articles) and answer following questions:

- What happens frequently?
- Were the children helped?



- What are your suggestions on how to help children against violence?
- Do you know who can help you?

List with supporting structures or numbers for students

#### PROCEDURE

After short introduction of protection rights for children the students will be asked to do some research about violence against children. This could be done as homework or during school lesson. It is very important to accompany that task because of the content, the students found. If it will be a homework it is really recommended to inform the parents and ask them to accompany their children.

After time of research the students should answer the questions. Afterwards the class discuss about findings. Important is the note of supporting structures and people in student's environment.

## Methodsheets 5 “Against Cyberbullying”

### INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying describes interpersonal behavior such as insults, defamation, stalking, etc. that takes place in a digital context. The term is used in a very inflationary way and with little distinction. In order to take preventive action as an institution or learning group, a common understanding of this phenomenon is important.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students approach a common understanding of the term “cyberbullying” through an introductory video and a subsequent brainstorming session. Afterwards, with the help of a “photo story”, the students deal with prevention and intervention mechanisms against cyberbullying. Furthermore, team and communication skills of the individual are strengthened.

### PREPARATION

Selection of an appropriate video clip:



Let's fight it together



Stop Cybermobbing

Cyberbullying.  
Create no hate

- Pinboard, whiteboard or flipchart with matching pens
- Tablets, smartphones or digital cameras
- Groups of 3-5 people, one digital device per group
- Simple programme or app for creating picture collages, e.g.
  - PC: Photoscape, PowerPoint, Word
  - Android & iOS: Pic Collage Photo Editor
  - Windows Phone: Fotor

### PROCEDURE

Introduce the topic of cyberbullying with your learning group by showing a short film. After the film, talk to the students about what they have seen and what has happened and lead them to brainstorm together. Every student write the word Cyberbullying in the middle of a paper. In an open

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discussion, all ideas and thoughts on the topic of “cyber-bullying” are expressed and those that everyone agrees with and that are associated with the phenomenon are written down around the middle word.

In small groups or in plenary, the students discuss what they can do themselves in case of cyber-bullying. The ideas are collected and discussed on a flipchart under the heading “What to do against cyber-bullying”. Afterwards, the students creatively implement in small groups the jointly developed solution strategies in a small photo story. Having small groups of 3-5 students work together and each get a device to take photos. The students can act as actors themselves (consider in advance where the photo stories will be shown and whether any legal issues need to be taken into account). Limit the number of pictures (4-6 are sufficient) to allow enough time for processing. Clarify in advance whether the stories will be presented afterwards or what will happen to them beyond that.

Tip: Ask the participants to develop a photo story with a happy end.

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