Guidelines for prevention strategies against cyberbullying in schools – a review of current preventions
Sofia Berne

Sofia Berne starts her lecture speaking of the COST IS0801 *Cyberbullying: Coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings*. COST is an organization that enables the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. One working sub-group of the COST IS080 on cyberbullying was to examine and analyze already nationally published guidelines in 25 countries in Europe, Australia and Israel. She was part of this working group and the focus on this lecture is to present a review and recommendations of guidelines for preventing cyberbullying. During this lecture she will review relevant research evidence, and then highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the guidelines, concluding with recommendations for each category. Guidelines were found for following groups; parents, young people, schools and teachers.

Parents. International research has showed that pupils fear that technology would be restricted to them if they were to tell their parents. Pupils also feel that adults have little insight in the cyber world and cyberbullying and consequently may lack understanding. However, in Sweden there are many pupils that suggest that they would tell parents. This highlights the importance of giving parents knowledge about how to support their children if they are victimized online. She gives two examples on how parents can be supportive: (1) Parents need to set aside time to listen to the children to take part of their perspective to get an opportunity to help them. (2) Parents need to improve their technical skills to prevent and deal with cyberbullying for example, by learning to save evidence. Parents also need to seek knowledge about how they can help the school in preventing and dealing with cyberbullying.

Young people. International research has showed that young people who are cyberbullied perceive that supportive actions from their peers can be helpful. International research has also showed that young people suggest that they would tell a friend if cyberbullied. However, few young people in Sweden suggest that they would tell a friend if cyberbullied. The guidelines lacked information about how adults can help young people develop skills that they can use to assist friends in in difficult situations. For example, to encourage young people that if they discover that someone is cyberbullied they should contact the site and urge them to remove any abusive photos, videos, or text. Young people need to be encouraged to report the incidents to adults for action to be taken.

Teachers. International research indicates that the 'digital' generation gap between young people and their teachers may be a potential barrier in attempts to help students who are cyberbullied. According to her the guidelines recommend that teachers should monitor and supervise young people´s use of technology. For example, by teaching young people about how to be a nice friend on internet and online etiquette rules. The guidelines recommend that teachers need to treat reports of cyberbullying seriously and with clear consistent action. However, information is missing about how the teachers can do this. Moreover, teachers need to engage young people in the school´s antibullying policy.

School. International research has showed that schools need to emphasize the importance of that teachers, parents and pupils need to collaborate in order to combat cyberbullying. Lastly, Sofia Berne highlights that it is the school management responsibility to give clear guidelines to teachers and the young people about how to respond and behave to cyberbullying.

Summary written by: Sofia Berne