

Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines

Adopted 16th February 2020



**Fun, Learning
and Achievement**

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Statement of intent

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and the wider YFC community so they can participate in YFC activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. **Bullying of any kind is unacceptable throughout the Federation.** If bullying does occur, people within YFC should be able to speak up and know that incidents will be investigated and addressed promptly and effectively.

We aim to ensure that:

- All members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and the wider YFC community should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and the wider YFC community should be aware of the NFYFC policy on bullying, and be able to refer to it when bullying arises and is reported.
- As a Federation, we take bullying seriously. Members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and the wider YFC community should be encouraged to report bullying behaviour and assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying behaviour and observation of bullying without action is unacceptable. Young Farmers regards bullying as a safeguarding issue and will always take action if they observe or are informed that a child is at risk as a result of bullying.

What is bullying?

The Anti Bullying Alliance defines bullying as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online (2019)

Bullying can take many forms, it can be:

- **Emotional** being deliberately cold and unfriendly towards others, isolating others, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, manipulation, coercion and peer pressure (e.g. hiding property, unwanted text messages, threatening gestures).
- **Verbal** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling or banter that is hurtful or discriminatory.
- **Physical** pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, punching or any use of violence.
- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Material** when possessions are stolen or damaged or extortion takes place.
- **Prejudice based** when the bullying behaviour and/or harassment is related to a prejudice towards a protected characteristic. Under the Equality Act 2010 this relates to gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, disability and age.
- **Indirect** Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Bullying behaviour can take place offline or online (often referred to as cyberbullying).

Cyberbullying refers to bullying behaviour online or through the use of electronic devices. This includes computers, laptops, smart phones, tablets or gaming consoles. Cyberbullying includes sending or posting abusive comments about another person or group, blackmailing or manipulating people to send personal details or images, uploading and sharing hurtful images or videos, deliberately excluding others from online social groups or group chats, impersonating others online with the intent to cause hurt or embarrassment, targeting vulnerable individuals and groups with abusive comments and abusing others through gaming sites.

We have created a separate resource to support you if you have concerns about cyber / online bullying (see Appendix 6).

We all experience conflict from time to time within relationships and the majority of the time this is not bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour is:

- Usually repeated, though one-off events can turn into bullying behaviour or create an environment where bullying is more likely to happen (i.e. sharing hurtful gossip about someone that then spreads around a group).
- Intended to cause harm.
- An abuse of power where the person or people being bullied find it hard to defend themselves.
- Distressing and hurtful to the person or people being bullied rather than gentle teasing between friends (this should be closely observed as teasing or ‘banter’ can often evolve into bullying within a peer group when people hide their feelings because they don’t want to lose face).

Who can be bullied?

Anyone can be bullied by anyone else – *members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and members of the wider YFC community* can be bullied by *members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and the members of the wider YFC community*.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying can have a serious impact on physical and mental health, and is against the culture and ethos of the YFC community. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe and valued within the YFC community. Members who have engaged in bullying behaviour need to be challenged and supported to learn different ways of behaving. We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

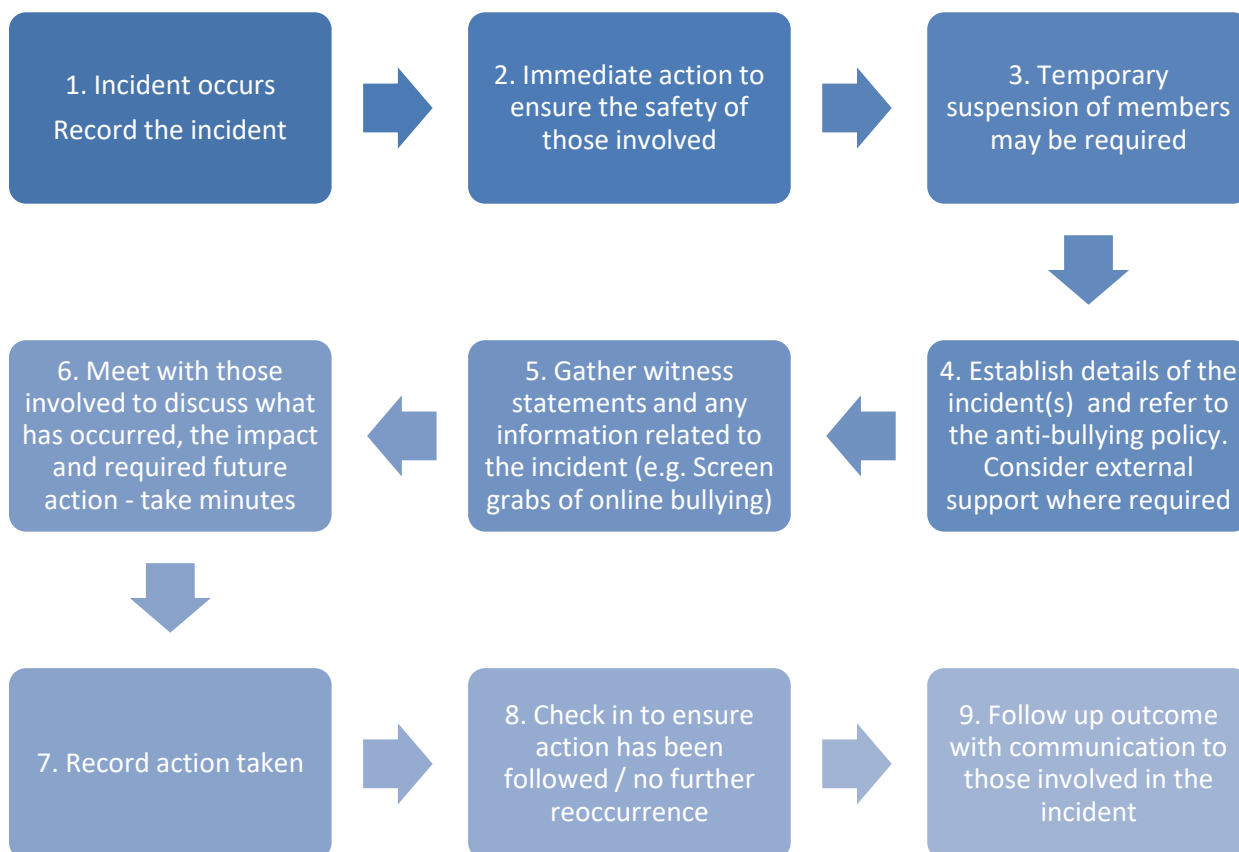
Procedures for dealing with bullying

Bullying behaviour should be responded to in the first instance by:

- Listening carefully to any reports of bullying behaviour.
- Reassuring the victim(s)/those who have reported the incident that action will be taken.
- Continuing to offer help, advice and support to those impacted.

If you are concerned that a child or adult is at risk of serious harm refer to your safeguarding policy, contact your county office or NFYFC for support with the issue.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour Incidents Flowchart



All bullying incidents should be investigated. In responding to incidents of bullying, those in a position of responsibility should take action when bullying is reported in the following ways:

- Immediate action must be taken to stop the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying. In taking action, care should be taken in order not to make the situation worse. *(Those addressing the concern must also exercise care and not jump to conclusions. It is not inconceivable that reports may be made with malicious intent, also jumping in too soon without thinking it through may increase the bullying).*
- Ensure that the person who is bullied is supported and is not at risk of immediate harm. If an individual(s) is harmed or facing immediate danger follow the safeguarding policy.
- Explain that you will follow the procedures in the YFC anti-bullying policy. Establish the who, what and when of the bullying incident, and the impact of the bullying behaviour on those involved. Ask for any supporting evidence – for example in the case of cyberbullying the content might still be online or the victim/witnesses might have made screen grabs. In considering the actions you need to take ensure the matter is dealt with calmly, involving only those that need to be informed, whilst maintaining confidentiality wherever possible; involve the parents of those involved if the member is under the age of 18. Ask the person experiencing the bullying behaviour what you can do to help them feel safe. It's important that they feel in control of the situation as they may be fearful of the impact of sharing what has happened to them.
- As soon as possible a written account of the bullying incident should be documented by the people addressing the situation. This should include date and time, those involved, information on the situation, impact of the situation on individuals concerned and the wider peer group, planned actions and any

available evidence. Where external organisations are contacted this should also be logged. Appendix 3 can be used as a template to log this.

- Contact your local County Federation or NFYFC and inform them of the situation and access information, advice and support if necessary.
- Inform parents if you feel it is in the best interest of a child or young person impacted by bullying.
- If during the exploration of an incident you have concerns that the victim has been harmed or is at risk of harm and/or you think it may constitute criminal behaviour follow the safeguarding policy and escalate as appropriate. Your county office or NFYFC can support you to refer information.

If the issue remains internal

- Arrange a meeting with those involved in the situation to gather information, these may need to be separate occasions for the victim(s) and those displaying bullying behaviour to avoid potential conflict or intimidation. During these meetings, along with gathering information it should be made clear to all that bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Where possible encourage the person doing the bullying behaviour to see the impact of the bullying behaviour and why it needs to stop.
- Persons independent to the incident should be responsible for gathering / reviewing information and conducting any relevant meetings.
- Any damage caused by the person exhibiting bullying behaviour should be addressed and they should take responsibility for their actions. *For example they may be asked to apologise for hurtful behaviours.*
- Following the gathering of information, those involved in addressing the concern may need to explain why a sanction (if any) is given to member(s) involved; this could include exclusions from particular events / activities and / or membership sanctions. This should be documented and letters sent to individuals where appropriate. In some cases parents will need to be informed of the decision of those involved regarding issues that affect their child(ren).
- If possible, the people involved may be able to be reconciled following informal mediation. In serious cases this may require the support of external agencies - this is known as restorative work.
- Be aware that bullying can have a serious short and long term impact on emotional wellbeing and mental health. If you have concerns that a person is experiencing depression or anxiety as a result of bullying it is important that they see their GP or access counselling services. If you have serious concerns about their personal health and safety (e.g. concerns about self harm and suicidal thoughts) follow safeguarding procedures.
- Following an issue, time may need to be invested in the group to ensure further incidents do not occur. In order to provide informal education to the members the club activity programme could include the Beat Bullying Curve module to encourage group discussions. If the bullying is prejudice related (e.g. homophobic or sexist) you might also want to consider the wider culture of the group and whether you need to address general attitudes, use of language, physical boundaries, etc.
- A group agreement is often a successful way of moving forward from an incident as it establishes a guide for future behaviour that members take ownership of.
- After the incident(s) have been investigated and resolved, the issues should be monitored to ensure a repeat of the situation does not take place.

If incidents of poor conduct continue to occur members may need to be managed in accordance with the Standards of Behaviour policy which can be obtained upon request from your County Federation.

If an anonymous allegation is received by the club, county or NFYFC we will investigate as thoroughly as possible but we will not be able to report back to the complainant regarding the action taken.

Useful Contacts and Resources

Anti Bullying Alliance www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Bullying UK www.bullying.co.uk

ChildLine www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/bullying.aspx

Diana Award www.diana-award.org.uk/

Ditch the Label www.ditchthelabel.org/

Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk/

Mind www.mind.org.uk

YoungMinds www.youngminds.org.uk/

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Support for adults experiencing bullying – www.mentalhealthsupport.co.uk/AdultBullying.html

National Bullying Helpline – for anyone being bullied – www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

Workplace Bullying – www.acas.org.uk

Bullying Incident Recording Form – Appendix 1

This form can be used to record disclosures, allegations and observations of bullying behaviours within YFC. It should be retained within confidential club records in line with safeguarding recordings. NFYFC gives guidance that officers / interviewers should not meet a member/s alone.

DETAILS OF PERSON/S INVOLVED IN CONCERN/ALLEGATION			
Name		Membership No.	
D.O.B:			
Address			
Telephone			
Mobile			
Position (in relation to young person)			
Additional Notes			
DETAILS OF THE CONCERN/ALLEGATION			
Date/Time			
Location			
SUMMARY OF INCIDENT			
Contacts of other people involved			
Name	Role	Organisation	Contact Number

Further details on the reverse side of this form

Date allegation received	
Name of contact in YFC referring the complaint	

ACTION TAKEN		
Contact Name	Date	Conversation/Action takes
Date:		Ratified by:

REPORTED TO POLICE / SOCIAL CARE TEAM
Contact Name
Date
Position
Details of advice / guidance received

Signed	Date
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Appendix 2 - Signs and symptoms bullying could be occurring

A person may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Those in positions of responsibility should be aware of these possible signs and should act on any concerns:

- A change in their usual behaviours, for example, goes from being enthusiastic and confident to withdrawn.
- Appears fearful or hesitant to participate in activities.
- May request to be accompanied to or from the YFC activities when this has not previously been a concern.
- Doesn't want to go to YFC activities when a particular person or group of people are present.
- Changes their usual routine – travel to YFC activities, members they interact with etc.
- Becomes anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill suddenly during YFC activities.
- Has possessions go “missing”.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money or has monies repeatedly “lost”.
- Seems to be preoccupied with checking their phone and seems distressed after use.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Is exhibiting bullying behaviour towards other people.
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises – this could indicate self harming.
- Is using or misusing drugs and alcohol.
- Running away or attempting or threatening suicide.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above behaviours.
- Stops attending Young Farmers' activities.

This list is not exhaustive and these signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated and recorded.

Appendix 3 - Guidelines for supporting individuals who have experienced bullying behaviour

- Discuss the situation with members of the officer team or those addressing the concern; seek advice from the county office or NFYFC if necessary.
- Speak to the member(s) involved but avoid intensive questioning of the victim(s) as this may lead to further loss of self-confidence and if a crime has been committed, may contaminate the evidence. Find out the who, what and when of what has occurred and the impact it is having. If it is within YFC, or if YFC members are involved we have a duty to respond (remember a lot of bullying takes place online or through mobile phones and this can at any time of the day or night). If the bullying is taking place at school or college they should have their own anti-bullying policy and support services in place to help.
- Make sure the person who is bullied is supported and kept safe. This may mean removing them from the club/county/position temporarily while the issue is addressed. This should be discussed with parents if the member is under 18. Reassure the victim that you will work with them to stop the bullying behaviour (you cannot promise them that the bullying will stop immediately).
- Try to find out information about the situation through discussions with other people in the club/county.
- If a person has been harmed as a result of bullying, external organisations may need to be contacted such as the police or social care.
- Depending on the circumstances, supervision of groups may need to be tightened or reviewed.

Strategies for creating safe YFC activities

- Run the Beat Bullying Curve module within your club to raise awareness amongst the members. Contact your county office or NFYFC for support and resources.
- Ensure that negative attitudes and behaviors are challenged and people within YFC behave in an appropriate way towards one another.
- During your club programming involve some confidence building exercises or learning of new skills; think of ways to bring the group together, team building and group challenges can be a useful tool.
- Ensure there is access to people within YFC and the wider community with whom those affected by bullying behaviors can highlight this and discuss their concerns.
- Ensure that those within YFC feel confident that when they ask for help it will be taken seriously.

Remember that bullying does not only happen to those attending young farmers clubs as members, elected officers (club/county/area/national), club leaders, volunteer helpers, staff, parents and members of the wider YFC community. All can be victims of bullying and also be bullies themselves – all levels of the organisation should know where they can go if they have a concern. If you witness bullying behaviour within YFC you should tell someone.

Appendix 4- Bullying prevention strategies

In YFC we want to create an inclusive environment for all, a community where people feel safe and protected. To support this clubs, counties, area and national activities should -

- Promote an ethos which ensures respect for each individual member
- Make sure all members feel confident to challenge offensive or disrespectful language, attitudes or actions.
- Encourage open discussions about bullying and ensure that every level knows where they can go to talk to someone about bullying or raise a concern
- Make people aware of the negative impact of bullying
- Develop a culture where anyone that has concerns about bullying behaviour can freely ask for help without fear of being ignored, ridiculed or ostracised.
- Promote the understanding that vigilance by all involved in YFC is an important defence against bullying
- Take effective action and sanctions against bullying behaviour
- Learn from incidents – what additional work might you need to do with members to challenge bullying behaviour
- Run annual sessions on bullying, it's effects and how to deal with it and prevent it – this could be done in Anti Bullying week which takes place in November each year
- Have a County trainer deliver the Beat Bullying Curve module for your members – contact your County office or NFYFC to arrange this and access the resources
- Contact an anti-bullying organisation like the Anti-Bullying Alliance or Kidscape to access anti bullying resources / further training opportunities. Your county office or NFYFC can support you with this

Bullying or Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is an umbrella term to protect the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk. All bullying incidents are matters of child protection, but not all are serious enough to trigger the implementation of the safeguarding policy. You will need to use your judgement or seek advice from your county or NFYFC as to whether a bullying incident puts the member at risk of specific harm and therefore triggers a formal safeguarding response.

Situations which always require implementation of the safeguarding policy:

- If a member has been threatened with physical harm
- If a member reports they have been physically hurt
- If a member has been incited by others to self-harm or to participate in an activity that puts them at risk of harm
- If a member reports they have been assaulted sexually or are at risk of sexual harm.

In these situations a crime may also have been committed and so you may need to be particularly cautious to handle the situation with sensitivity, without asking leading questions. Take down the facts as they are presented to you and contact your county office or NFYFC for further support.

Appendix 5 - Strategies for working with those displaying bullying behaviour

The immediate response must be to attempt to stop the bullying, to ensure the protection of the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of those being bullied and those observing the behaviour. YFC is an inclusive environment and if possible we should take action to support all parties involved in situations. If the person displaying the bullying behaviour is not genuinely committed to changing their behaviour, the most appropriate response is:

- Outline steps to be taken; if the person continues to behave inappropriately they may need to be removed from the organisation for a period of time to safeguard the welfare of others. Contact and discuss this with parents if the member is under the age of 18.
- Try to support the person in changing his/her behaviour. Provide an opportunity for them to talk freely about the behaviour and potential reasons for it.
- Make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable to everyone involved in YFC and that all concerns will be addressed.

Strategies for supporting those displaying bullying behaviours

- Explore the possibility of the bullying behaviour being a compensatory activity, for example, lack of friends, no outside interests etc. Other issues may be happening in the member's life that they are finding it difficult to cope with or express. It may also be in retaliation to something that has happened in the past.
- Try to help the person displaying bullying behaviours to develop acceptable behaviours in order to participate in YFC as an active member. The member may need to be signposted to support for dealing with anger, frustration, handling aggressive feelings, channeling energy in worthwhile ways, resolving conflict and having empathy with others.
- If appropriate, set up a confidential environment, where those involved can talk freely about any feelings they may have in the presence of supportive members/officers/staff or wider YFC community.
- Ask the parents for support in addressing the problem (if person involved is under the age of 18).
- Contact external organisations for support if necessary.
- Focus on any positive behaviours of the member displaying bullying behaviours.
- Use programme opportunities to counteract prejudices, encourage group work, members supporting one another and confidence building activities.
- Work with the group to avoid labeling of members; promote a culture of support and encouragement.
- Any damage caused by the person showing the bullying behaviour must be redressed as soon as possible and the person displaying bullying behaviors should be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.
- Natural sub-groups of members will form within clubs and this is to be expected but officers should be aware if these groups become cliques (that isolate or intimidate others) and take appropriate action to unite the group and counteract behaviors that could develop into bullying behaviours. Officers should be particularly alert to isolation or intimidation of members with protected characteristics (e.g. disabled members and/or those with special educational needs, members of a minority race or faith, members who identify or are perceived to identify as LGBT).

Appendix 6 - Advice about cyberbullying

Cyber bullying refers to bullying behaviour online or through electronic equipment.

The most common forms of cyber bullying behaviour includes sending or posting abusive comments about another person or group, blackmailing or manipulating people to send personal details or images, uploading and sharing hurtful images or videos, deliberately excluding others from online social groups, impersonating others online with the intent to cause hurt or embarrassment, targeting vulnerable individuals and groups with abusive comments and abusing others through gaming sites

Top tips if you experience cyberbullying

Be Share Aware: Be careful what you share about yourself and others online. Even if you share information within a private message or group this can quickly be shared outside of the group. If you feel uncomfortable with anything someone is asking you to do, **do NOT do it**, such as taking a photo or video of yourself or sharing information, photos etc - anything posted or sent online has the potential to be made public.

Don't retaliate: Tempting as it can be to post or share something back this just extends the conflict and makes it harder to see who was in the wrong. It's important to remove yourself from the situation so you can gain perspective on what has happened, and feel in a calmer, safer place.

Save evidence: Content can be quickly taken down so screen grab the evidence. If you don't know how to do this, ask a friend for help.

Careful approach: If you know the person and they are another member or a friend you might feel confident enough to ask them to stop, or to remove the content. Explain why you find it offensive. People sometimes don't think before they share content online so it might be that the person didn't mean to hurt your feelings or cause offence.

Block: If you don't know the person, or there is clear intention to cause you harm; consider blocking the person so they can't further attack from you that account.

Report: Consider reporting to the platform provider. Reporting routes, response times and breaches of conduct are different for each social network provider. If you can't find where to report, ask a friend for help. If you have concerns about specific content or images, many websites have the option to click CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) which is managed by the UK's National Crime Agency. The NFYFC E-Safety Policy contains further information on this.

Ask your friends for support: It can be helpful if other people gently come to your defence – they shouldn't engage in an argument or retaliate but a few comments saying why they love you can make a big difference to how you feel!

Contact the police: If the cyberbully has threatened you with harm, subjected you to a racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist attack or encouraged you to harm yourself, you should contact the police. If you feel at immediate risk of harm, dial 999.

Take some time out: If the cyberbullying is through a particular social network, site, app or game, a few hours or days away from it might help restore you to a place of calm. Spend time with friends and family that make you feel good about yourself – or visit other networks, sites, apps or games where the bullying isn't happening. Cyberbullies are looking for a response so the less you give back, the less they have to work with.

Increase your defences: It's a good idea to take a look at your friends and followers and if it makes you feel safer, reduce these to people you know and trust. Check your privacy settings and see whether there are things you can do to make yourself harder to find or to hide some of your content (e.g. private account on Instagram, posts only visible to Friends on Facebook). If you are not sure how to do this, ask a friend or family member for help.

Don't be afraid to ask for help: Experiencing any form of bullying is horrible. Don't keep it to yourself – reach out to friends and family for help. If you need to talk to someone in confidence you can always call ChildLine or access their online service. If the bullying has made you feel anxious or depressed, see your GP.

Oops – what if I posted something that has caused offence: It's easily done. If possible remove the content and let the person know you're sorry.

Keep cool online: If you're angry with someone – try and keep it off social networks. It's always better to talk things through face to face, or over the phone rather than engaging in an argument in front of an audience of hundreds/thousands/millions.



Fun, Learning and Achievement

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