**Ministry takes steps to deal with “cyber-bullying” in Czech classrooms**

**The use of mobile phones in classrooms schools has become a serious issue in the Czech Republic, with ever more children recording their classmates and even teachers, and posting the footage on the web. The Education Ministry has now, for the first time, recognized the issue of cyber-bullying, and has come up with guidelines to help schools control the use of mobile phones and other technology.**



Listen: [RealAudio](http://helix.radio.cz:8080/ramgen/rm/EN/08/12/EN081229-14-high.rm?start=10:01.09&end=13:26.85)

Download: [MP3](http://old.radio.cz/mp3/podcast/en/curraffrs/081229-ministry-takes-steps-to-deal-with-cyberbullying-in-czech-classrooms.mp3)

A video posted on the internet in June this year shows a Czech teacher telling a pupil off for having a messy desk. The student talks back, which makes the teacher lose his temper and smack the boy, who then storms out of the classroom. Another clip posted on the web shows a group of students bullying their teacher who ends up with a trash bin on his head. Schools around the Czech Republic have increasingly had to cope with what is known as cyber-bullying – students recording clips of their abusive behaviour and posting them on the web. The Education Ministry is now taking steps to deal with the problem, issuing a set of guidelines designed to bring the use of modern technology in schools under control. Tomáš Bouška is a spokesman for the Education Ministry.

*“We simply have to face the reality. And the reality is very simple – we have mobile phones and we have all kinds of electronic devices which the kids can use at schools and they also use them. And the school has to react to it because in a number of cases, the use of electronic devices was very problematic.”*

The ministry has recognized the term cyber-bullying for the first time; the new guidelines tell teachers what cyber-bullying is, and advise them on various ways of curbing the issue.

*“What we have defined in this methodological instruction is electronic bullying; e-mail or text message bullying as well as further usage of these footages on the internet with the help of such tools such as youtube and others. It’s basically about bullying teachers or schoolmates with video or audio footage which can even be used to* blackmail *somebody.”*

Many schools have already adopted rules limiting the use of mobile phones during lessons. But a recent poll by one the Czech Republic’s cell phone network providers revealed that only around half of the schoolchildren at such schools respect these rules. Also, teachers often have no way of enforcing them. Tomáš Bouška says different approaches will be open to teachers under the new guidelines.

*“Teachers can forbid it; if it’s still happening and the kids are still using them, they can inform the parents. They can also take the mobile phones away and give them back after the end of the class if necessary. And if it still goes on, there are also some harsher steps included in our guidelines which could even involve the police.”*

**Pre-reading activities**

1. *In pairs/groups discuss these questions.*
2. Do you use your mobile phone in the class? What do you use it for?
3. Have you heard about, or even had an experience with cyber-bullying?
4. *Try to explain the meaning of these expressions in English*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| footage | recognize | guidelines | tell sb. off | messy | lose sb. temper | storm out of |
| trash bin | cope with | blackmail | reveal | approach | forbid | harsh |

1. *Give the words of opposite meaning.*
2. Messy
3. Increase
4. Abusive
5. Recent

**Reading activities**

1. *Scan the text and give the main idea.*

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1. *Put down 5 questions about the text and then divide into pairs and ask each other the questions.*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

1. *How would you define “cyber-bullying” and which are its forms?*

**Post-reading activities**

1. *Watch the video and put down a short article about what you saw.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiZdqp85EfI&feature=fvwrel>

1. *Watch the short video and answer these questions.*

Cyber Bullying - The Effects (Short Film)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7ztnN_wpUk>

1. Who is presented in the video?
2. What happened to the girl in the video and?
3. What is the definition of cyber bullying?

**Cyber-bullying to be punishable in Czech schools**

The Czech Education Ministry will introduce cyber-bullying as a punishable offence in Czech schools. A new regulation, which will come into force in January 2009, will allow headmasters to punish pupils who record teachers or classmates on mobile phones. Cyber-bullying will also include attacks via e-mail or posting offensive personal materials on the internet. Experts say that the number of such incidents in the Czech Republic has been on the rise. Last year, a pupil in Ostrava recorded a classmate beating three other school children; other students recorded their friends bullying a teacher in the classroom, and posted the footage on the web.

*Discuss the new types of criminal acts that have emerged lately as a result of new technologies.*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_crime>