<u>Nathan's Story</u>

My name is Nathan and I am 14 years of age. I want to tell you what happened to me so you can do something about it if it happens to you.

I have been bullied over the internet. Many small incidences occurred after I created a website for free with Friendpages. This site allowed anyone to create a homepage where you could post pictures articles and have people sign your guest book. At the time, creating a website seemed like a good idea, so I did. I knew that people other than my friends wouldn't be able to get on there unless they knew what the name of the website was and that it wouldn't show up on web searches if for example, someone typed my name into Google. My friends created websites of their own and often left messages on each others guest books. However, soon I began to receive anonymous messages that were threatening and hurtful. Although I deleted most of these, I still have some saved on my computer.

Some of the messages said;
Nathan, I hate you. When I see you I will kill you.
You are ugly.
No one in school likes you
You are pathetic

There were many more messages left on my guest book which were more offensive and threatening than these which I found quite hurtful.

I tried to pretend that I didn't care. I did.
I know that it was only a few people that were writing these things about me but it can feel like a million people when every day, you walk with your head down, hoping to avoid the crowds of people who must dislike you because you're not the same as them.

Although I tried not to let their messages get to me, they must have hurt me deep down, because I still lack confidence in myself and feel the need to seek others advice when considering the way I look. I stopped using my website and carried on with life as normally as I could.

One of my friend's thought he would stick up for me and posted some comments on his website criticising the people who had written things about me.

A few days later in school, I found myself surrounded by about fifty people, all threatening me, and swearing at me. One of the boys started pushing me; I knew that if I pushed him back they would jump me so I just took it. I felt as if they all hated me.

I managed to get away and went straight to registration where I knew I would be safe, but it didn't end there. People started posting photographs of me around the school with things like 'Watch your backs' typed on the posters.

I have experienced further bullying in school from the same boys and I have even stayed off school some days because to frightened to leave my own home. When so many people tell you something for such a long period of time, you're bound to end up believing it, aren't you?

Nathan.

- ■ How do you think Nathan felt after reading the message? (Angry, Sad, Scared, Happy – begin to expand vocabulary within each emotional range)
- ■ What advice could you give to Nathan if you had read what people were posting on his website?
- ■ Why do you think people wanted to hurt his feelings?
- ■ How could they have had Nathan's photograph to make so many posters?