

Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying

Who is this advice for?

This advice is for parents and carers about cyberbullying. It provides advice and information about how they can protect their child from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

Overview

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

Parents and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle. ;

they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying often involves a large audience and this increases the pressure.

Parents and carers need to understand the way young people communicate with others, and the potential risks. Asking their child simply not to use technology is not a realistic way to prevent or react to cyberbullying. [Internet Matters provides an overview of cyber-bullying in more detail](#) and [NSPCC - bullying and cyberbullying prevention](#)

Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.

Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.

Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.

Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations.

Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.

Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher, or the anti-bullying co-ordinator or call a helpline like Childline on 08001111 in confidence.

Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.

While you are on your mobile phone make sure you also pay attention to your surroundings.

Possible signs of cyberbullying

It is not always easy to spot the signs of cyberbullying as it can happen all the time, which is a feature that makes it different from other forms of bullying. Be alert to a change in your child's behaviour, for example:

Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone;

Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.

Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media.

Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or outraged.

Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and school mates.

Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations.

Difficulty sleeping.

Low self-esteem.

What to do if you suspect a child is being cyberbullied

If you suspect a child or young person is being harassed or bullied

need of support to return to school. To help schools support pupils who are severely affected by bullying the Department has produced advice for schools, available at: [supporting bullied children](#)

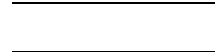
Cyberbullying

to disseminate their safety



(i.e. a user) to

on someone
the post and
report the



Mobile phones

All UK mobile phone providers have malicious or nuisance call, text or picture message centres set up and have procedures in place to deal with such instances. They will help you to change the number of the person being bullied if necessary. If you want to prosecute the perpetrator contact the police. The mobile provider will work closely with the police and can usually trace calls for them.

Some service providers such as Vodafone produce annual magazines for parents and carers (

