

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullies use digital technologies to bully others on social media, online games and mobile phones. This includes online behaviour which targets victims by repeatedly aiming to scare, anger or shame them, such as sending hurtful messages or threats, excluding children from online activities or posting embarrassing photos of them on social media.

Many children feel unable to confide in an adult because they feel ashamed and think they will be judged, told to ignore it or close their account, which they may not want to do. Not knowing what support is available can make them feel extremely distressed.

Unlike bullying in real life, online bullying follows the child everywhere, via social networks, gaming and their mobile phone. Digital devices enable communication 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for victims of cyberbullying to escape. Also, most information shared electronically is permanent and public.

Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful behaviour, especially if it is threatening or if people keep sending offensive messages that scare the recipient. The police could take action if they decide the messages could be criminal.

If anyone is threatened with physical harm you should notify the police. If it's an immediate emergency, phone 999.

Protect Children Online

- Always monitor your child's online activity - keep computers and digital devices that they use in a family room, to keep an eye on their usage.
- Ensure that they play age-appropriate games.
- Activate parental controls on your internet service, devices and the sites they access.
- On social media sites, check age restrictions of each site. You could 'friend' or 'follow' your child to monitor their interactions.
- Ensure that they know they should never post personal details or pictures of themselves online. Always remember the SMART rules:



www.childnet.com

Worried about your Child?

Some warning signs that a child might be being bullied online:-

- A drop in self-esteem or a change in personality, e.g. anger, depression or crying,
- Withdrawal from family and friends and finding excuses to stay away from school
- Reluctance to let family members anywhere near their mobiles, laptops etc

Children: Stay Safe Online

- Think twice before posting or sharing anything online - it may stay online forever and could be used to harm you later.
- Never be pressured into taking pictures of yourself that you wouldn't want other people to see.
- Remember - once you send it you have lost control of an image or comment.
- Don't post anything which gives your real name, address, school, phone number or which will enable a stranger to contact you in real life.
- Use strong passwords to keep yourself safe and if anyone sees it, change it as soon as you can.
- If you use a public computer, always sign out of any web service you use before leaving it.
- Only allow people you trust to see your posts: learn about the privacy settings of your social media apps, to manage who can see your profile, send you messages or comment on your posts.

If a Child is being Bullied Online

If you think you're being bullied, tell someone you trust such as your parents or another trusted adult. At school you could talk to a member of staff.

Schools take bullying seriously and will take action against it. If you are being cyberbullied by other students, report it to your school. If you can't talk to someone you know, search for a helpline, to talk to a professional counsellor.

If you are being bullied on a social platform, always save evidence, such as text messages and screen shots of social media posts, to show what has occurred. You could also:

- Avoid further contact or retaliation to those sending the messages.
- Report hurtful comments, messages and photos and request they be removed.
- Unfriend or completely block people, so they can't see your profile or contact you. On most social media sites, people aren't notified when you block, restrict or report them.
- In addition, you could report their behaviour on the platform. When making a complaint about being bullied online, copy the terms and conditions which have been breached, to prove the company's obligation to take action. Social media companies must keep their users safe and are introducing ways to better protect their users.

You can always talk to someone at Childline - no worry is too big or small. You can speak to someone online or on the phone: Call: 0800 1111



If you need more help - for example if someone has tried to make you do something you don't want to do, or said something bad will happen if you don't do as they say - you can get support from CEOP by clicking this button.



Advice for adults about keeping children safe online

The internet is a wonderful resource for young people to learn about the world and to connect with their friends. Unfortunately, it does have its risks, but if these are managed carefully, we can help children to stay safe online.

You can help your child to enjoy the internet safely by familiarising yourself about digital technology (which includes computers, laptops, SMART phones and online games), investigating the social media sites that they will be using, such as chatting on games, as well as the risks that they pose.

Links to helpful sites

	www.nspcc.org.uk
	www.childline.org.uk
	www.ceop.police.uk
	www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents
	www.bullying.co.uk
	www.kidscape.org.uk
	www.internetmatters.org
	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf
	www.kooth.com
	www.mumsnet.com

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8_10/stay-safe/

