

CYBERBULLYING 101

a quick guide for parents and educators

Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm, harassing, humiliating, or threatening text or images, inflicted through the internet, interactive technologies, or mobile phones. It can occur 24/7 and go viral throughout a school, community or worldwide instantaneously.

Teachers report that cyberbullying is their #1 safety concern in the classrooms. Pew Research found that nearly 60% of teens report being cyberbullied and consider it to be a major problem.



Cyberbullying Tactics:

- **Doxing:** revealing sensitive or secret personal information to harass or expose the intended victim
- **Gossip:** Sharing information to damage a person's reputation/relationships
- **Exclusion:** Deliberately excluding someone from an online conversations, groups or events to hurt their feelings
- **Impersonation:** Creating an online presence in someone else's name/account in an effort to solicit or post personal or false information about that person
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly posting or sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages on websites/social media and gaming platforms/blogs, or by messaging/texts
- **Cyberstalking:** the use of the internet, or other electronic means, to harass and intimidate a selected victim
- **Flaming:** Online fights where scornful and offensive messages are posted on websites, platforms forums, or blogs
- **Outing and Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, which is then shared online
- **Cyberthreats:** Remarks or distressing material threatening or implying violent behavior to create significant fear
- **Revenge Porn/Sextortion:** nonconsensual distribution of intimate images and sexual extortion (See "Sexting 101" Quick Guide)

Possible Effects of Cyberbullying:

- Feelings of humiliation, isolation, embarrassment, anger, powerlessness
- Negative impact upon self-esteem
- Depression or anxiety
- Declining grades
- Loss of interest or fear of attending school/other activities
- Sleep or eating disorders
- Suicide-related behaviors or thoughts, self-harm (sometimes encouraged or promoted by the cyberbully)

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Conversation Starters:

Ask your child:

- Are your profiles set to "private"?
- Would it be easy for someone to track you down?
- How many online "friends" do you have?
- What kind of information do you consider safe? Unsafe?
- Have you posted anything that you wouldn't want your grandmother to see?
- What messages do your pictures and postings portray?
- Have you been contacted by a stranger?
- Have you ever said/posted anything online you wish you could take back?
- Do you treat people differently online than you do offline?
- Has anyone ever hurt your feelings by anything they posted about you online?
- Have your friends ever put themselves at risk? If so, what did you do about it?

Discuss ways for your child to be an upstander and not a bystander when they witness another being bullied. Teach your child not to comment on posts that insult or harass others and not to forward embarrassing photos or messages.

If you suspect cyberbullying is taking place:

- Stay calm. Keep open lines of communication with your children.
- Meet with school administrators to discuss school's bullying/cyberbullying policies if the bullying involves another student. Consider discussing the bullying situation with the bully's parents/guardians.
- Do not delete messages or posts from cyberbullies: save as evidence. If your child is in immediate danger or threatened with harm, crime or illegal behavior, contact your local police.
- Report cyberbullying to the website or app and teach your child to do the same. Teach them it's their responsibility to report it.
- Report child sex abuse material, obscenity or a cybercrime to:
CyberTipline.com or 1-800-THE-LOST
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7 to help individuals in suicidal crisis with support.

Call 800-273-8255 or chat by visiting suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

safety & prevention 101
RULES N' TOOLS®

No child is immune to online threats: Parents are the "first line of defense."

- Build an atmosphere of trust and accountability and communicate regularly about online activities and relationships.
- Teach your child to never share personally identifiable information (PII) including date of birth, address, full name, school or any image that can be used to identify or track your child down.
- Your child should not accept any online activity meant to intimidate, threaten, tease, or harm them or anyone else and to come to you if this occurs.
- Remind your child that those who bully want to make their victims feel as if there is something wrong with them; it is the bullies who have the real problem.
- Encourage your child to talk to you (or a trusted adult) if anyone says or does something online that makes your child feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Teach your child to 'think before you post' and remind them there are 'no take backs'.
- Teach your child to never send or post sexually suggestive images and to tell you if someone sends and/or requests explicit images.
- Know your child's user names and passwords.
- Check to see if your child has any hidden apps or accounts.
- Watch out for warnings signs such as: reluctance to use computer/smart phone, a change in your child's behavior, mood, appetite or sleep, a reluctance to go to school, becoming withdrawn or depressed, or closing social media accounts and/or establishing new ones.
- Block bullies and use privacy settings on all platforms and devices.
- Implement Safety Rules and Software tools ("*Rules 'N Tools*®") on all internet-enabled devices and platforms used by your child. **See the Enough Is Enough® "*Rules 'N Tools*®" guide at internetsafety101.org/safety-intro**
- Essential software tools include setting age-appropriate filters, monitoring and time management software.
- Have your child sign the **Family Contract for Smart Phones and Digital Devices**.

Enough Is Enough® (EIE) Quick Guides are based on EIE's **Internet Safety 101®** Emmy Award-winning multi-media program and website designed to educate, equip and empower parents, educators and other adults with information needed to protect children from internet dangers.

For more information, visit internetsafety101.org and enough.org.