



Today's children and young people have grown up in a world that is very different from that of most adults. Many people experience the Internet and mobile phones as a positive, productive and creative part of their activities and development of their identities; always on and always there. Above all information communication technologies support social activity that allows young people to feel connected to their peers.

Unfortunately, technologies are also being used negatively. When children are the target of bullying via mobile phones or the Internet, they can feel alone and very misunderstood. They may not be able to identify that what is happening to them is a form of bullying, or be confident that the adults around them will understand it that way either. Previously safe and enjoyable environments and activities can become threatening and a source of anxiety. As mobile phone and Internet use become increasingly common, so has the misuse of this technology to bully.

1. WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT CYBERBULLYING?

Bullying is not new, but some features of cyberbullying are different from other forms of bullying:

➤ **24/7 and the invasion of home/personal space.**

Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.

➤ **The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.**

The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying. Electronically forwarded content is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for targets to move on.

➤ **People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous.**

This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.

➤ **The profile of the bully and target.**

Cyberbullying can take place both between peers and across generations; teachers have also been targets. Age or size is not important. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying; for example, by passing on a humiliating image.

➤ **Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional.**

It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences – for example saying something negative online about another pupil, or friend that they don't expect to be forwarded or viewed outside their immediate group.

3. TIPS

- (a) Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send.
- (b) Think before you send – whatever you send can be made public and could stay online forever.
- (c) Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself. Change your password if you suspect that someone has hacked into your profile. Only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
- (d) Ignore the person – Sometimes the easiest thing is to ignore the person and go on about your business.
- (e) Log off if the harassment is bothering you.
- (f) Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- (g) Don't retaliate or reply!
- (h) Save the evidence –keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
- (i) If there was a profile that was created about you without you knowing, contact the company who runs the website to have the profile or language taken off.
- (j) If you are upset about what is being said, talk to someone you trust. Don't feel like



4. WHEN TO TALK TO PARENTS

Many times, children are able to take care of the cyberbullying on their own. Sometimes, it gets out of hand though and it's helpful to talk to an adult about what is going on. If you feel scared or overwhelmed, maybe even trapped, it is definitely time to talk to an adult. If you don't feel comfortable speaking with a parent, seek out other adults like teacher, school counselor or other family member such as aunt or uncle.

5. SUPPORTING A FRIEND BEING BULLIED

Give reassurance that your friend has done the right thing by telling you. Refer the case to your teacher/Rector and inform his parents.

6. HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT CYBERBULLYING?

Sometimes, you want to talk to your parents about what's going on in your life, but you don't quite know how to start the conversation. Here are some ideas that might be useful:

- Be clear about what is going on. If you are vague, your parents may not understand what you're saying and may be less able to support you.
- Talk about how you feel about the harassment. Do you feel hurt? Afraid? Frustrated? Annoyed? Just glad it's over?
- Plan to talk to your parents when you can have their full attention. If they are busy with something else, they will not be able to listen to what you are saying as well.
- Look for answers together. Your parents may not know how to stop the harassment or bullying either. Suggest that you look online for answers together.
- It may even be that you know more this stuff than your parents does. If that's the case, tell them what you know about Internet harassment and cyberbullying, and share websites and other resources that you think will be helpful. This way they'll have a better idea of what you're going through.

7. IF YOU ARE TARGETED BY A CYBERBULLY:

- **STOP!** : Don't do anything. Calm down!!
- **“Drop the Mouse! And step away from the computer and no one will get hurt!”** Try find ways to help them calm down. This may include doing yoga, or deep-breathing. It may include running, playing catch or shooting hoops. It may involve taking a bath, hugging a stuffed animal or talking on the phone with friends.
- **Block!**: Block the cyberbully or limit all communications to those on your buddy list.
- **and Tell!** : >>Tell a trusted adult, you don't have to face this alone.



National computer Board - Factsheet On Cyberbullying
(information for students)