

Cyber Bullying

THE FACTS

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WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyber bullying include mean text messages or emails, rumours sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

WHY CYBER BULLYING IS DIFFERENT

Kids who are being cyber bullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyber bullied have a harder time getting away from the behaviour.

- Cyber bullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyber bullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

EFFECTS OF CYBER BULLYING

Cell phones and computers themselves are not to blame for cyber bullying. Social media sites can be used for positive activities, like connecting kids with friends and family, helping students with school, and for entertainment. But these tools can also be used to hurt other people. Whether done in person or through technology, the effects of bullying are similar.

Kids who are cyber bullied are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school
- Experience in-person bullying
- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problems

PREVENT CYBER BULLYING

Parents and kids can prevent cyber bullying. Together, they can explore safe ways to use technology.

BE AWARE OF WHAT YOUR KIDS ARE DOING ONLINE

Talk with your kids about cyber bullying and other online issues regularly.

Know the sites your kids visit and their online activities. Ask where they're going, what they're doing, and who they're doing it with.

Tell your kids that as a responsible parent you may review their online communications if you think there is reason for concern. Installing parental control filtering software or monitoring programs are one option for monitoring your child's online behaviour, but do not rely solely on these tools.

Have a sense of what they do online and in texts. Learn about the sites they like. Try out the devices they use.

Ask for their passwords, but tell them you'll only use them in case of emergency.

Ask to "friend" or "follow" your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.

Encourage your kids to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know, is being cyber bullied. Explain that you will not take away their computers or cell phones if they confide in you about a problem they are having.

ESTABLISH RULES ABOUT TECHNOLOGY USE

Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, cell phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online. Help them be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.

Encourage kids to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren't friends could use it.

Tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise their control over their online identities and activities.

UNDERSTAND SCHOOL RULES

Some schools have developed policies on uses of technology that may affect the child's online behaviour in and out of the classroom. Ask the school if they have developed a policy.

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RECEIVE POOR GRADES

HAVE LOWER SELF ESTEEM

HAVE MORE HEALTH PROBLEMS

SKIP SCHOOL

EXPERIENCE IN-PERSON BULLYING