

Cyberbullying:

What Parents Need to Know

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is when someone is being mean towards another person on any online or electronic service.

Young people are increasingly exposed to online interactions, making them vulnerable to cyberbullying. This can happen through social media, messaging apps, or gaming platforms and often goes unnoticed.

Cyberbullying can lead to anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from family and friends. Parents should stay informed, maintain open communication, and monitor online activity to help protect their children. Early awareness and support can make a big difference.

Examples of cyberbullying include

- Sending a mean messages to someone
- Spreading photos/videos of another person that upsets them
- Posting hurtful comments about someone
- Creating a fake profile of someone or misleading someone by using a fake profile.

What do I do if my child is being cyberbullied?

- It is important to consider whether removing the child's device will lead them to feeling isolated. If your child is using their device to connect with their friends and seek support, it may be helpful for them to have access to their devices.
- Create a safe space for you and your child to have a discussion about what is happening and how they are feeling. It is important to be non-judgmental and ensure the child is feeling heard.
- Explore the problem by asking questions that will help you to understand when this began, what platforms are being used, if it is occurring in person and who is involved. It is important to give the child the opportunity to consider their options and avoid jumping to a solution.
- Explain what their options are and provide as much information as you can to ensure they can make an informed decision.
 - Consider if mental health services such as counselling will be helpful for your child.
 - Contact the police If your child has been physically attacked and the video has been shared online.
- Responding to the cyberbullying may escalate the situation therefore you should encourage your child to ignore it. If available, try blocking or muting the person who is sending the hurtful messages and offer to collect the evidence for them if it is to upsetting for the young person.
- Consider changing the privacy settings to limit who can access their profile.
- Consider exploring what supports the child's school may be able to offer.
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It is important to monitor any changes in your child's routine and overall mood. Examples of this could include withdrawing from school and extracurricular activities, skipping meals and avoiding social situations.



Reporting the Cyberbullying

- Start collecting the evidence of cyberbullying by keeping it stored on the device, taking screenshots and ensuring it includes the date, time, and details of the account. Do not save any sexual or inappropriate images of the people involved as this is illegal, please record the URL instead for evidence.
- You can report the cyberbullying via the online platform or through the eSafety Commissioner website www.esafety.gov.au/report.

References

Cyberbullying | What is cyberbullying? | eSafety Commissioner www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/cyberbullying
Cyberbullying | Guide for Parents and Carers eSafety Commissioner

Help available

- Cyberbullying can make a young person feel alone and scared, but there is help available. You could talk to family or friends, or a support service like Fair Foundations Youth and Family Specialist team at hello@fairfoundations.org.au
- Other supports include kidshelpline.com.au or headspace.org.au



Fair Foundations

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