Live My Digital Parental Guide

Cyberbullying

69%
of young people have been cyberbullied

[Research conducted by Ditch the Label in 2013].

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying that takes place online, or using digital devices such as smartphones or tablets.

How cyberbullying occurs

Cyberbullying that is instigated by peers largely takes place on social media platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook following a fall out or as a way to draw negative attention to someone. Young people also face cyberbullying from people they've never even met in person on forums, chatrooms and open social media profiles, which is why it is important to keep your personal details and social media profiles private.

How it makes your child feel

Although cyberbullying is a form of bullying, the effects can differ greatly from face-to-face bullying. When you are bullied online, particularly in situations where many people can see it happening, it's extremely humiliating.

Often onlookers are waiting to see how you'll respond, and sometimes it can be hurtful just to see that no one is stepping in to stand up for or support you.

Cyberbullying can occur any time, any place - when your child's on holiday, when playing with friends, when doing homework. So they may feel trapped in the sense that they're unable to escape the abuse.

In addition to the emotions your child may be feeling after being bullied, they have the added pressure of knowing that any videos, pictures or comments posted about them may be permanent. Once something is posted online, it can be visible for you and others to see, years down the line.

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📖 Jargon Buster

Trolling:
Deliberately posting abusive comments to someone online (usually in a public forum) in order to provoke a response

Outing:
Tricking or convincing someone to share embarrassing information or secrets about themselves and then distributing them online without that person's consent

Griefer:
Someone who harasses others during multi-player gaming in order to irritate or upset them

Catfish:
People who fabricate online identities, usually to scam or cyberbully others anonymously

Fraped:
This occurs when someone accesses a person's online accounts without their permission and then pretends to be that person, posting content with the aim of embarrassing or humiliating them

Cyberstalking:
The act of stalking or harassing a victim online, often anonymously

Happy slapping:
Takes place when physical assaults are recorded and posted online

Baiting out:
Posting content (usually videos) that name and shame 'promiscuous' or 'disloyal' people

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👍 What to do if your child is being cyberbullied?

Talk to them about it if you spot any warning signs that they may be being bullied. Try and be non-judgmental and understanding, then offer your advice and support

Get evidence of the bullying. Screen shots are an effective way of capturing evidence so that it can be shown to others when needed

Block the person bullying them so that your child and the cyberbully aren't able to communicate with each other

Report cyberbullies to the social networks, web masters or admins so they can step in to try and rectify the situation

Ignore cyberbullies instead of retaliating where possible. As with all bullying, the bullies usually want to get a reaction out of you

Privacy is key when it comes to protecting yourself from anonymous cyberstalkers or trolls. Encourage your child to switch their privacy settings to share content only with their "friends"

Age limits on social networks, apps and games should be communicated to your child (eg. the Terms of Use on Instagram state that you must be at least 13 years old to use the service)

Escalate to your child's school or the police for support if the situation is serious and you notice that your child is getting upset, being threatened or you're seeing signs of self harm

Anyone who makes threats to you on the internet could be committing a criminal offence. It's against the law in the UK to use the phone system, which includes the internet, to cause alarm or distress. It could also be against the 1997 Harassment Act. **www.bullying.co.uk**