

- Report cyberbullying to a trusted adult, save all communication with the cyberbully and talk to a parent, teacher, police officer, or other adult you trust.

Since most cyberbullying takes place at home, it's important that parents know about cyberbullying and get involved in preventing it. Just like parents help their kids avoid inappropriate websites, they can protect them from cyberbullying.

What Parents Can Do

- Keep your home computer in a common, busy area of your house, not your kid's room.
- Set up email and chat accounts with your children. Make sure that you know their screen names and passwords and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.
- Regularly review their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know them.
- Familiarize yourself with the common acronyms used in instant messenger and chat rooms from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- Install software designed to assist in keeping your kids safe online, by revealing your kid's online conversations.
- Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever done it, experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyberbullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason kids don't tell adults when they are cyberbullied.
- Take complaints of bullying seriously. Do not dismiss your child or expect your child to work through the situation alone.
- Tell your child that you do not tolerate bullying behavior. If you learn that your child has been bullying others, work with your child's teacher, counselor, or other caregiver to end the bullying.

- Reporting the problem to an Internet service provider or website moderator

You can also help prevent cyberbullying by:

- Speaking with other students, as well as teachers and school administrators, to develop rules against cyberbullying
- Raising awareness of the cyberbullying your community, hold an assembly/creating fliers to give to younger kids or parents
- Sharing NCPC's anti-cyberbullying message with friends

Check out the following resources to learn more about preventing cyberbullying

- www.ncpc.org (PDF) provides tips to teens about cyberbullying.
- [Stop Cyberbullying Before It Starts](#) (PDF) provides useful information for parents.
- www.stopcyberbullying.org has a fun quiz to rate your online behavior, information about why some people cyberbully, and how to stop yourself from cyberbullying.
- www.stopbullyingnow.com has information about what you can do to stop bullying.

Don't forget that even though you can't see a cyberbully or the bully's victim, cyberbullying causes real problems. If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.

Delete cyberbullying.

Don't write it.

Don't forward it.

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CYBERBULLYING



Although bullying was once considered a rite of passage, parents, educators, and community leaders now see bullying as a devastating form of abuse that can have long-term effects on youthful victims, robbing them of self-esteem, isolating them from their peers, causing them to drop out of school, and even prompting health problems and suicide.

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A recent study by the Family and Work Institute reported that 1/3 are bullied at least once a month, while others say 6 out of 10 teens witness bullying at least once a day. Witnessing bullying can be harmful, too, as it may make the witness feel helpless or that they are the next target.

Children who are bullied are often singled out because of a perceived difference between them and others, because of appearance (size, weight, or clothes), popularity, intellect, ethnic or religious affiliation and sexual orientation.

Bullying can be a gateway behavior, teaching the perpetrator that threats and aggression are acceptable even in adulthood. In one study, nearly 60% of boys classified as bullies in grades 6-9 were convicted of at least one crime by the age of 24, while 40% had three or more convictions. Most teenagers spend a lot of time on a cell phone, texting or instant messenger chatting with friends and uploading photos, videos, and music to websites. They may have online friends with whom they play games and exchange messages. Teens live a lot of their lives around the technology of cell phones and the internet. And bullying has followed teens online.

Online bullying, called Cyberbullying, is similar to other types of bullying, except it takes place online and through text messages sent to cell phones. Cyberbullies can be classmates, online acquaintances, and even anonymous users, but most often kids do know their victims. Cyberbullying is a problem affecting almost half of all American teens. Whether you've been a victim of cyberbullying, know someone who has been cyberbullied, or have even cyberbullied yourself, there are steps you and your friends can take to stop cyberbullying and stay cyber-safe.

Some examples of ways kids bully online are:

- Sending someone mean or threatening emails, instant messages, or text messages.

- Excluding someone from an instant messenger buddy list or blocking their email for no reason.
- Tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing info and sending it to others.
- Breaking into someone's email or instant message account to send cruel or untrue messages while posing as that person.
- Creating websites to make fun of another person such as a classmate or teacher.
- Using websites to rate peers as prettiest, ugliest, etc.

Both boys and girls sometimes bully online and just as in face-to-face bullying, tend to do so in different ways. Boys more commonly bully by sending messages of a sexual nature or by threatening to fight or hurt someone. Girls more often bully by spreading rumors, sending messages that make fun of someone or exclude another.

The Effects of Cyberbullying - Victims of cyberbullying may experience many of the same effects as children who are bullied in person, such as a drop in grades, low self-esteem, a change in interests, or depression. However cyberbullying can seem more extreme to its victims because of several factors:

- Occurs in children's home. Being bullied at home can take away the place children feel most safe.
- Can be harsher. Often kids say things online they wouldn't say in person.
- Far reaching. Kids can send emails making fun of someone to their entire class or school, or post them on a worldwide web.
- Anonymity. Cyberbullies often hide behind screen names and email addresses that don't identify who they are. Not knowing who is responsible for bullying messages can add to a victim's insecurity.
- May seem inescapable. It may seem easy to get away from a cyberbully-just get offline-but for

some kids not going online takes away one of the major places they socialize.

Cyberbullying is a complicated issue, especially for adults not as familiar with using the Internet, instant messenger, or chat rooms as kids. Like typical forms of bullying, it can be prevented when kids know how to protect themselves and parents are available to help.

When teens were asked why they think others cyberbully, 81% said that cyberbullies think it's funny. Others believe that youth who cyberbully:

- Don't think it's a big deal
- Don't think about the consequences
- Are encouraged by friends
- Think everybody cyberbullies
- Think they won't get caught

What Kids Need to Know

- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal websites.
- Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
- If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
- Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know who is a bully.
- Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email.
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if received the message.
- Help kids who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
- Always be as polite online as you are in person.
- Refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages.
- Tell friends to stop cyberbullying.
- Block communication with cyberbullies.
- Delete messages without reading them.