

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

www.parentline.org.au



Cyberbullying

REMEMBER:

- *Cyberbullying can be very distressing to its victims*
- *Like all forms of bullying it must be taken seriously*
- *Help your children take charge of the technology in their lives*
- *Discuss safe and unsafe behaviour on the internet*
- *Provide your children with the emotional support they need when they are distressed*

Cyberbullying is any form of bullying that is carried out using technology, especially the internet or mobile phones.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Using mobile phones by texting or by using a camera
- Sending threatening emails or forwarding nasty emails
- Setting up malicious websites
- Insulting or excluding someone in chatrooms

Recent research shows that 14% of children in Australia suffer from cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is different to bullying that occurs in person because:

- It can take place 24/7 meaning it can be difficult to escape
- It can reach a wider audience.
- The written word and/or pictures can be permanent and there for all to see.
- It can be more secretive and is less easily detected
- It can be anonymous

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CYBERBULLYING

Be Proactive

Don't wait until a problem occurs. Prevention is always the best approach. Protect your phone number. Only give it to friends, and keep a note of who you've given it to. Consider using caller ID blocking to hide your phone number when you call someone.

Don't give out personal information to anyone you don't know (or don't want to know), including your name. Similarly, don't leave your name on your voicemail as it confirms to the person doing the bullying that they've called the right number.

Have regular discussions with your child about how they might respond to cyberbullying if it occurs.

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Don't Respond

Don't reply to the bully. Responding gives the bully the 'kick' they're after. But it is essential that you encourage your child to tell you or a teacher or another adult when there is something concerning them. Reassure them they will not be in trouble with you if they ever do.

Suggestions for Safe Behaviour

- Keep username and passwords secret. Make passwords and security questions hard for others to guess.
- Don't tell anyone your name, where you live or other personal details which might help them identify you.
- Only put the friends you know on your contact lists.
- Don't respond if someone says something that is not appropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable. Leave the site immediately.
- Be careful about what you say online; misunderstandings can occur more easily because there are no non-verbal cues when communication is not face to face.

Use Technology to Protect Your Family

Block and delete the individuals who bully your child online. Save the text, images, or the website that contains the bullying.

Also talk to your mobile phone company to see if they can help. Your phone company may be able to stop certain numbers calling you. They may also be able to provide you with a new phone number. Ask them about your options.

Make sure you keep a record of what has happened – include the date and the time. Keep messages. This information can be used as evidence.

Have a Rest From Technology

Encourage your child to turn their phone or computer off sometimes. This encourages them to lead a balanced life and can give them themselves a break from contact with individuals who harass them.

The Law

The law is on your side. People who bully believe (incorrectly) that mobile phones and computers are a means of taunting their target anonymously. They are wrong. It's a criminal offence to use a mobile phone or computer to intimidate, harass or offend another person. And almost all malicious contacts can now be traced.

Useful Websites

www.netalert.gov.au

www.reachout.com.au

www.thewoodverdict.blogspot.com