

FAQ and Fact Sheet: Cyberbullying

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying happens when kids bully each other through electronic technology, such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools and apps, including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

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

Facts About Cyberbullying

Research on cyberbullying is varied and growing. However, because kids' technology use changes rapidly, it is difficult to design surveys that accurately capture trends.

June 2014: Nationwide, 14.8% of students report being cyberbullied³, including being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) report, by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

In 2011, about 9 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being cyberbullied at school during the school year, according to the Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013 (ISCS 2013) report, by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey finds that 16% of high school students (grades 9-12) were electronically bullied in the past year.²

The 2008–2009 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that 6% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyberbullying



Why is Cyberbullying Different?

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

- Cyberbullying 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.
- Cyberbullying 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 Cyberbullying

Cell phones and computers themselves are not to blame for cyberbullying. 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 cyberbullied are 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

What Kids and Teens Should Know:

- Never respond to harassing or rude comments.
- Save or print the evidence.
- Talk to your parents or guardian if you are harassed; get help reporting this to your ISP, school, or local law enforcement.
- Respect others online.
- Only share your password with your parent or guardian.
- Change your passwords often.
- Password protect your cell phone.
- Use privacy settings to block unwanted messages.
- Think before posting or sending photos – they could be used to hurt you.
- Contact the site administrator if someone creates a social networking page in your name

What to Report

- Anyone you don't know who asks you for personal information, photos, or videos.
- Inappropriate or obscene material from people or companies you don't know.
- Misleading URLs on the Internet that point you to sites containing harmful or inappropriate materials rather than what you were looking for.
- Anyone who sends you photos or videos containing obscene content of individuals 18 and younger (the possession, manufacturing, or distributing of child pornography is illegal)
- Anyone who asks you to meet in person for sexual activities (no one should be making sexual invitations to you online – and it's an especially serious crime for adults to do it).

Where to go for more information

<http://americanspcc.org/bullying/cyberbullying/>

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/lesson/breaking-down-hate-speech-9-12>

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>