

# Cyberbullying



## 1 What is Cyberbullying?



Cyberbullying is any harassment that occurs via Information Communication Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet. Vicious forum posts, name calling in chat rooms, posting fake profiles on web sites and cruel email messages are all ways of cyberbullying.

## 2 Examples of Cyberbullying



A student is bombarded by anonymous threatening and taunting emails at home, even though there is no direct harassment at school. The victim has no idea who is sending the messages and starts to feel like everybody is against him.

A school bulletin board is spammed with name-calling posts that spread vicious rumours about a specific student. The rumours aren't true but kids at school see the posts and believe them. The student is then ostracized by peers. This student is the victim of cyberbullying.

A nasty fake profile is posted at a social networking site using a student's real name, photo, and contact information. That student starts getting weird email messages from strangers who think the profile is real. Some of the messages are crude. Some of the messages are mean. This is another example of cyberbullying.

These are just a few examples of cyberbullying. If you are taking part in things like this it is not harmless fun. You are being a cyberbully. If you are the victim of this type of treatment you are being cyberbullied and there are things you can do to stop the harassment.

## 3 What can be done about Cyberbullying?

There are many things that can be done to combat cyberbullying. The most important thing a victim of cyberbullying can do is not to respond to the bully. Do not play in to the bully's games. Do not answer emails, or sms or calls, do not respond to posts, do not

engage in a chat room exchange and do not copy what the bully is doing. Ignore the bullying and get help from parents and teachers.

While ignoring the bully be sure to save the evidence so that school officials, Internet Service Providers and even the Police can properly deal with the bully. Cyberbullying may give bullies anonymity but it always leaves evidence.

## 4 Tips

- Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send.
- Think before you send – whatever you send can be made public and could stay online forever.
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself. Change your password if you suspect that someone has hacked into your profile. Only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.
- Ignore the person – Sometimes the easiest thing is to ignore the person and go on about your business.
- Log off if the harassment is bothering you.
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
- Don't retaliate or reply!
- Save the evidence – keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
- If there was a profile that was created about you without your knowledge, contact the company who runs the website to have the profile taken off.

## 5 When should the police become involved?



Repeated or excessive harassment via sms, email, forums or chat rooms is an offence and should be reported to the police. Threats of violence should also be reported to the police. Try to save all messages as evidence. The police will know what to do from there.

You do not need to put up with cyberbullying. You can get help. Cyberbullying leaves a clear trail of evidence and this can work to the advantage of the victim. Cyberbullies are just bullies with a new weapon in their arsenal of harassment; treat them like any other bully and they lose their power.

