



Cyberbullying Guidelines

10 Things Kids Can Do

1. Reach out to a trustworthy adult

Believe it or not, adults can do a lot to make cyberbullying situations better—but they can't do anything if they do not know about them.

2. Disengage

Your instinct in a cyberbullying incident may be to strike back—to return the insults, post equally lewd photos, or spread retaliatory rumors. Never do it. Two wrongs don't make a right, but vengeance can lead to three bad outcomes:

- It ups the ante on aggression. The person who “started” it will likely escalate their cruelty even farther.
- It creates equal culpability in the eyes of adults. Accountability is not based on “who started it?” but rather: *who did the right thing to bring the situation to an end?*
- It can potentially land both kids in legal jeopardy, since cyberbullying can be a criminal offense.

3. Log Off & Block Harassers

It is important to be able to walk away from toxic friendships. A first line of defense in stopping cyberbullying is logging off from an account temporarily. You have the ability to instantly end a digital conversation and should plan to do so the minute you recognize that cruelty has begun. In cases where the harassment is repeated, block the aggressor altogether.

4. Use Privacy Settings

You are in charge of how you are treated by others. Use privacy settings to set boundaries on meanness.

5. Take Screen Shots

While reports of cyberbullying are believable, accusations are also deniable. Take screen shots of incidents of cyberbullying, including offensive emails, texts, Facebook posts, Tweets, photos, videos, phone numbers, and so forth. This kind of solid evidence, when shared with adults, can go a long way in bringing cyberbullying to a screeching halt.



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6. Step In to Stop It

Even if you are not the originator of a cruel online message, when you forward it, “Like” it, or even see it without doing something to stop it, you become part of the problem. Never forward, share, or passively condone cyberbullying activities.

7. Report It

Most social networking websites have easy, anonymous reporting systems. Anytime you learn that cyberbullying is taking place, show enough character to report it right away. The site will take down the content and you can feel good knowing that you took decisive action to help yourself or someone else. The general reporting address is:

abuse@twitter.com

abuse@instagram.com

abuse@websitename.com

8. Empathize

As you prepare to post any message via technology, bear in mind one thing: *there is a human being on the receiving end of your keystrokes*. Too often, technology numbs us to the reality that our words can wound and we may say things online that we would never say to someone’s face.

9. Remember: You are Not to Blame

If you are on the receiving end of cyberbullying, keep in mind that it is not your fault. There is nothing wrong with you and you don’t deserve to be treated this way. What is happening has everything to do with the character of the person(s) doing the bullying and nothing to do with you. Believe it.

10. Be a Friend

If you know that someone else is on the receiving end of cyberbullying, reach out to them. Remind them that they are not to blame for what is going on. Be there for them as a friend and rally others to support them too. There is strength in numbers and you can make a huge difference when you turn the tide away from cruelty and toward kindness.