

Cyberbullying

Older children

Cyberbullying occurs when the internet, email or mobile phones are used to deliberately and repeatedly engage in hostile behaviour to harm someone. Cyberbullying occurs most commonly among older children and teens.

Cyberbullying can have negative academic, social and psychological outcomes, so providing support for children and young people who are involved in cyberbullying is critical. Helping children to manage responses to negative online behaviour and keeping them connected online and offline to friends and family that they trust are important measures to protect them from potentially negative outcomes.

The following tips can help you to manage cyberbullying with your child.

- At this age your child's internet use should still be closely monitored. To help with this try to keep the computer in a shared or visible place in the home.
- Talk to your child about cyberbullying before it happens. Work out strategies to address cyberbullying that you are both comfortable with, so your child knows what to expect if they do report concerns to you or another trusted adult.
- Reassure your child that you won't block their access to the internet if they report concerns about cyberbullying. Help them to stay connected online and offline to supportive family and friends.
- Help your child to block anyone who sends offensive content. Most social networking services allow users to block and report someone who is behaving badly,
- Advise your child not to respond to any negative messages but to save the messages and details of the senders. You may want to save the messages for your child so that they don't keep reading them and potentially feel worse.
- Encourage children to support their friends and report concerns about friends who may be involved in cyberbullying.
- Help your child to develop the skills they need to interact safely and respectfully online. Guide their online activities and help them learn to communicate appropriately with friends and family.
- Advise your child never to share their password with friends—friendships may be shortlived at this age and former friends can mis-use passwords to cyberbully.
- If your child has been involved in cyberbullying and seems distressed or shows changes in behaviour or mood it may be advisable to seek professional support, including through the Cybersmart Online Helpline at www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx. The Cybersmart Online Helpline provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people. Your child's schools may also be able to provide support and guidance.
- If there is a threat to your child's safety the police can help. In life threatening and time critical situation call Triple Zero (000).

More information

Cybersmart program provides a range of cybersafety materials for parents and their children. For more information, resources, advice and tips, visit the Cybersmart website at www.cybersmart.gov.au. Encourage your children and teens to take a look around the website. If you have young children, you may like to explore it together to help them understand how to protect themselves against online risks and make the most of their experiences online.