

Understanding Cyberbullying



What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a behavior that takes place over digital communication, via cell phones, computers, and tablets. Bullying is negative, aggressive behavior that involves harming another person through a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is typically repeated over time, creating a situation that is difficult for the victim to separate from.

Cyberbullying can be displayed in many forms:

Sending hurtful messages individually or in a group

Encouraging self harm or suicide on social media

Verbally abusing other players during video gaming

Using technology to exclude others

How do I recognize cyberbullying?

You may find that your child has a noticeable negative reaction when using their digital device. Other signs of cyberbullying include:

Quickly hiding a screen when other people are present

Hesitance to explain what they are doing on the platform

Using a device less and less

What should I do if my child is being cyberbullied?

Talk openly with your child about the problem and be a good listener

Review safety and privacy settings on the apps and platforms in question

Take screenshots of each instance

Block the cyberbully and report them to the platform's safety center

Escalate the issue to school administration or law enforcement if necessary

What if my child is a cyberbully?

All children make mistakes. If you discover that your child is using technology in a negative way:

Discuss the importance of digital reputation and kindness with your child

Review the family's online safety agreement and consider loss of privileges

Set parental controls on devices and monitor closely until the behavior is corrected

For more information:

fosi.org/parenting | cyberbullying.org | stopbullying.gov