



CYBERBULLYING THE SIGNS

PARENTS AND CARERS GUIDE

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This information helps parents and carers to recognise the signs that their child may be involved in cyberbullying.

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Cyberbullying is the use of digital technology to bully another person. It involves:

- misuse of power within a relationship
- behaviour that is repeated or can be repeated
- behaviour that causes harm.

Cyberbullying often occurs along with face-to-face bullying.

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What cyberbullying looks like

- online gossip and rumours
- leaving people out (this includes starting campaigns on social networking sites to exclude people)
- creating sites that mock or humiliate others
- repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming
- sharing someone's personal information online without consent
- sharing someone's information to cause embarrassment
- inappropriate image tagging (for example, adding abusive comments, messages and hashtags to a photo or video)

- creating fake accounts in someone's name. This might be done to trick someone or make them feel humiliated
- forcing, threatening or coercing someone to obtain nude or nearly nude images
- non-consensual sharing of nude or nearly nude images.

Some cyberbullying behaviours may be against the law. You can talk with the South Australia Police to find out more.

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Signs your child might be involved in cyberbullying

Changes in social and school engagement:

- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- withdrawal from family and friends
- avoidance of school, clubs, sports or activities
- stays home or comes home from school early due to feeling 'sick'
- poor grades and decline in the quality of their school work
- loss of interest in the activities that they normally enjoy.

Changes in their wellbeing and mental health:

- personality changes – more withdrawn, anxious, sad, frustrated or angry
- persistent sadness, frequent tearfulness, distress
- crying a lot, particularly in younger children
- poor physical health, low energy
- makes comments about suicide or that life is meaningless
- self-harm
- changes to sleeping or eating patterns.

Changes in digital technology use:

- secretive about online activities including mobile phone use
- upset, nervous or worried after using their mobile phone or other devices
- overly focused on maintaining an online presence
- avoids talking about or showing their online activity
- unexpectedly stops using their devices.

These behaviours do not mean your child is definitely involved in cyberbullying. Something else may be happening. They are a sign that your child needs help.

Speak to your child about what is happening for them. Offer them support. Keep checking in to let your child know that you are concerned and want to help.

Speak with your child's school. Ask if they know about any issues which could cause your child to feel upset or worried.

If your child is having suicidal thoughts or is self-harming it is important that you get professional support through a GP, psychologist or counsellor. If your child is in immediate danger call 000 and stay with them to keep them safe.



Resources

Bullying. No Way!

Online advice for families about preventing and responding to bullying.
www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

eSafety Commissioner

Online advice for families about online safety.
www.esafety.gov.au

Kids Helpline

Phone and online counselling service for people aged 5 - 25.
1800 55 1800 Anytime. Any reason.
www.kidshelpline.com.au
Online information for families.

Headspace

Phone and online support and counselling service for people aged 12 - 25.
1800 650 890 mental health and wellbeing support.
www.headspace.org.au
Online and phone information for families.



Other parent and carer guides

Cyberbullying: parents and carers guide.

Cyberbullying: what parents and carers can do.
www.education.sa.gov.au

