



# CYBERBULLYING WHAT PARENTS & CARERS CAN DO

## PARENTS AND CARERS GUIDE

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This information is for parents and carers whose children have been involved in cyberbullying incidents.

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### Why it's hard for children to talk about cyberbullying

**Many children and young people find it hard to talk about cyberbullying. This can be because they:**

- think adults do not understand the online world
- worry they won't be believed or they will be ignored
- worry that adults will over-react to the incident
- think they should be able to manage it on their own
- feel fearful, confused, embarrassed or ashamed
- worry that they will be in trouble, especially if they have contributed to the incident
- worry that things will get worse for them
- are worried their technology will be removed.

### If your child is cyberbullied

Cyberbullying can cause significant harm, so it is important to provide emotional and practical support to your child when they are being cyberbullied.

#### First steps

- Make sure your child is physically safe and emotionally safe - this is the first priority.
- Stay calm, listen closely and provide reassurance.
- Ask if your child is also experiencing face-to-face bullying.
- Take their concerns seriously.
- Thank them for telling you.
- Let your child know that:
  - you believe and love them
  - cyberbullying is not OK
  - the behaviour needs to stop.

### Plan together to find solutions

- Ask your child what they would like you to do. Suggest some actions you can take, and explore how your child feels about those options.
- Ask your child who else might be able to help.
- Make sure your child knows what the next steps look like.
- Make sure they have a range of trusted people they can talk to as well as you. Consider friends, extended family, people at school, community groups. Connection with others can be online and in person.

### Use technology

- Use technology to solve some problems. For example:
  - block people
  - set up or increase privacy controls
  - change user names
  - report inappropriate content to provider (for example, report to the social media site, online gaming provider or mobile phone service provider)
  - make a report to eSafety to have serious cyberbullying content removed.

### Talk with the school

- If your child is involved in cyberbullying with their school peers, you should talk with the school. Schools may be able to help with cyberbullying even if it happens off school grounds and outside of school hours.
- Your child's school might not know the cyberbullying is happening. Cyberbullying can sometimes be hidden from adults.
- Remember that cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying can happen together.

Work with your child and the school to find solutions.

### Keep an eye on what's happening

- Check in regularly with your child to see if the solutions used have stopped the cyberbullying.
- Get advice from the school about other sources of support if the cyberbullying has not stopped.
- Find emotional support for yourself. Talk with a trusted friend, family member or community support.

In serious cases, cyberbullying might be a crime. If you think the behaviours are illegal, talk with the South Australia Police.

### What to avoid

Some actions have the potential to make the situation worse. It might not stop the cyberbullying and may make things more difficult for your child.

For example:

- Confronting the child or young person who has done the cyberbullying. Or confronting their family.
- Deleting cyberbullying content may not be enough to stop the behaviour. You may need an additional solution.
- Writing negative online posts and comments about the child, young person or their family.



## If your child has cyberbullied

### Talk with your child

- Don't ignore or trivialize cyberbullying behaviour. Let them know that cyberbullying is not OK and it has to stop.
- Understand the story behind the behaviour. Find out what led up to incident and what happened afterwards.
- Talk about how they would feel if it happened to them.
- Explore with your child how things can be put right. Discuss different actions that your child can take and ask what help they would need to take those actions.
- Ask them what a good and fair outcome looks like.
- Talk about fair consequences for their behaviour. These should be directly related to the issue and be for a set time. For example, removing a privilege and making a plan for your child to earn the privilege back.
- Set up parental controls by using monitoring software and regularly check devices. Be open and honest about what you are doing and why. Some actions may be time limited.
- Develop a plan with your child about what they will do in future if they become upset, angry or frustrated with people online.
- Let your child know how you can help them if they are having problems online.

### Spend time with your child

- Maintain and strengthen your relationship. They will need your love and support more than ever.
- Make sure you notice and celebrate positive behaviours, especially online behaviours. Focus on, and talk about, your child's strengths and positive qualities.
- Role model positive relationships. Show how you manage conflict and differences in responsible and respectful ways, both online and offline.

### Talk to your child's school

- Make sure your child hears the same message from you and the school. Be consistent with messages about:
  - respectful behaviours
  - appropriate online and offline behaviours
  - school rules and consequences.

### Staying safe

- Prepare for mistakes and slips ups. Growing up is a learning process. Be persistent and consistent.
- Continue to talk with your child about appropriate online behaviours.
- Provide ongoing support, and stay involved. This is so they can stay safe and have positive relationships, on and offline.

## Resources

### Bullying. No Way!

Online advice for families about preventing and responding to bullying.  
[www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au)

### eSafety Commissioner

Online advice for families about online safety.  
[www.esafety.gov.au](http://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](http://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](http://www.headspace.org.au)  
Online and phone information for families.

## Other parent and carer guides

Cyberbullying: parents and carers guide.

Cyberbullying: the signs.

[www.education.sa.gov.au](http://www.education.sa.gov.au)

