

# A PARENT'S/CARER'S GUIDE TO CYBERBULLYING



## What is Cyberbullying?

*Cyberbullying is the term used to describe the repeated bullying behaviour of a person or group with the intent to cause harm, utilising electronic devices and features.*

Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying rarely affords any 'time-out' for the victim due to the relentless nature of the behaviour.

### 1. Peer Pressure

Using an online platform to pressure someone into taking part in something they don't want to do or forcing them to disclose certain information.

### 2. Nasty Messages

Even if it seems like all is well on your child's public social media feed, they might be receiving nasty or hurtful private messages.

### 3. Image-Based Bullying

Even if it's done 'as a bit of fun', sharing embarrassing or compromising images of someone can be devastating to a young person's self-esteem. There are now laws in place that prohibit this type of behaviour.

### 4. Passive-Aggressive Comments

Individuals tend to use passive-aggressive comments when they want to express a negative comment/opinion about an individual but do not want to do it to their face.

Instead, they express their comment subtly to an individual in the hope of influencing how that individual views the person who is the target of the comment/opinion. They may do this in a private group chat, for example, but never directing the comment at the victim.

### 5. Fake Accounts

Sometimes those intent on cyberbullying another set up a fake account specifically to send unkind messages or spread lies about them.

These can be blocked and reported to the social media platform but, ultimately, the person can just continue to set up new ones.

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## 6. Trolling

Trolling is a particular type of behaviour that can happen on social media platforms. Those engaged in it tend to find satisfaction in targeting people challenging their viewpoints and trying to provoke a reaction in them.

This sometimes leads to those impacted shutting down their social media account and disengaging from the platform, as they no longer feel able to participate safely.

## 7. Social Exclusion

Social exclusion happens when your child is excluded from a friend chat group. They may discover that a group was set up to talk nastily about them, with the members sharing mean comments.

Friends posting group pictures online without your child (with the intention of causing upset) is another example of social exclusion.

## What to do if your child experiences cyberbullying

- Block or remove the person as a follower/friend. It is also advisable for children to block others they see abusing people online.
- Report the issue to the site/app or phone company.
- Get your child to take screenshots of the evidence which may be required by An Garda Síochána or the school.

## Signs your child might be experiencing cyberbullying:

- They are avoiding school.
- They seem upset, sad or angry (especially after using their phone or other devices).
- They are withdrawing from usual activities.
- They suddenly lack interest in devices or rapidly switch screens when you enter the room.
- They no longer speak about or meet up with once close friends.