

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs on various platforms such as social media sites, text messaging, chat rooms, and websites using cell/smart phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can be in the form of text messages or emails, rumors sent by email and/or posted on social networking sites, lewd and embarrassing photos, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

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Children who are being cyberbullied are very often also being bullied in person. Cyberbullied children have a harder time getting away from the behavior at the hands of others because Cyberbullying can occur 24 hours a day and can reach a child even when he or she is alone. Cyberbullying messages and images are more often posted anonymously and distributed to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source of the sender. It is very difficult to delete inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, photos, and posts once they have been sent out into cyberspace.

Smart phones and computers themselves are not responsible for cyberbullying. Social and electronic media/communications can and should be used in a positive manner to connect children with friends and family, help children in school, and for entertainment. Bullying done in person or through technology carries lasting effects.

There is no single factor that puts a child at risk of being bullied or of bullying others. Bullying can happen in every sector of our society. Groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth; children and young adults with disabilities; and socially isolated children/young adults may all be at increased risk of being bullied.