

STOP

[Take time out before getting involved, and don't share or like negative comments](#)

- Encourage your child to tell you or another adult they trust if they see or experience cyberbullying.
- Be aware that cyberbullying can be a continuation of or a response to bullying already happening at school or elsewhere.
- Tell them not to retaliate in any way that is angry, offensive or threatening, likewise as an adult stay calm and listen without judging.
- Be aware that all forms of bullying can make children feel very sad, afraid and alone. Reassure your child that together you will sort it out.

[Try and get an overview of what's really going on](#)

- Online bullying can be complex, involving a number of people so it's best to gently explore together what might have happened to have resulted in the upsetting messages or posts.
- Collect any evidence and together assess how serious the cyberbullying is. You can take screenshots to capture the evidence.
- Help them feel empowered and supported. In the first instance, it may be more appropriate for them to try and deal with the situation themselves.
- If they are a perpetrator, help them understand the impact of their actions and ask questions to understand why they are behaving in such a way. Reinforce that this kind of behaviour will inevitably have consequences.

[Check community guidelines for the site you are on](#)

- Explore together what the social networks community guidelines are. *Click to see links to the top social network guidelines:* [Instagram](#) / [Snapchat](#) / [Facebook](#): [Twitter](#) / [Musical.ly](#)
- Explain to your child that most community guidelines advise users to:

Always respect others

Keep personal information secure

Make sure you have permission or the 'right' to share content before you do

Never to post anything that could be considered threatening, bullying or harassment, hateful, or inciting suicide or violence

Never post images that contain nudity, or glorify self-harm or violence

- Make your child aware that there may be content that upsets them that doesn't necessarily violate the sites' community guidelines. In this case, advise them to mute, unfollow or block the person who posted it.

SPEAK

[Ask an adult or friend that you can trust for advice](#)

- Create an environment where they feel safe to talk to you or a trusted adult about what they are going through ([See our guide](#)).

Check in with them regularly and ask open questions

Start conversations when you have sufficient time to talk at length

Open up and share your own online experiences

Be involved in their digital life on a regular basis

Be aware of [signs of cyberbullying](#) and keep an eye on their behaviour

- Try to stay calm and don't get upset or angry about what they are saying; resist the temptation to remove devices as this might lead to further feelings of isolation

[Use the report button on the social platform it's happening on](#)

- Help your child to report any offensive content they see to the appropriate social media provider – visit [Thinkuknow website for instructions](#) for the most popular apps.
- If the content is sexual, targeted at a child's ethnicity, gender, disability or sexuality, if threats are being made to harm a child or incite a child to harm themselves, then report the activity to the police.
- It is helpful to block or mute the person sending the messages so they can't contact your child.
- Don't delete their social media accounts or take away their device, as this could isolate them even further, and may make them reluctant to tell you things in future.

[Speak to one of the charities set up to help with situations like this, such as Childline](#)

- Make them aware of places to turn for help or counselling if they need it. See our [resources page](#) for a comprehensive list of organisations that offer support.

SUPPORT

[Give the person being bullied a supportive message to let them know they're not alone](#)

- Encourage your child to be kind to others and think about the impact of words and actions.
- Advise them to take safe and effective action to support the victim such as:

Sending a message of encouragement

Including them, in their activities, if the person is feeling isolated

Encouraging them to seek help in any way they can

- Discuss situations when your child can stand up for himself/herself or others – and be an ‘Upstander’ rather than a ‘Bystander.’
- Celebrate your child’s actions and his/her bravery when they take positive action to support somebody.

[Encourage them to talk to someone they can trust](#)

- Reassure your child that they have your full support and can approach a teacher or seek further help if they have been a victim of bullying.
- Listen to what they have to say and make sure they know you are taking it seriously. Agree together if you are going to speak out to support someone.
- Be aware that they may be reluctant to open up and report their friends if the issue takes place within a friendship group. See [our guide](#) to help them feel confident to share what is going on.

[Give them a positive distraction from the situation](#)

Spotting signs of cyberbullying

Your child might be reluctant to tell you that they are worried about cyberbullying so it’s important to look out for the signs:

- Stopping using their electronic devices suddenly or unexpectedly
- Seeming nervous or jumpy when using their devices, or becoming obsessive about being constantly online
- Any changes in behaviour such as becoming sad, withdrawn, angry, or lashing out
- Reluctance to go to school or take part in usual social activities
- Unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach upsets
- Avoiding discussions about what they’re doing online or who they’re talking to

When to take immediate action

If you become aware that your child is being cyberbullied, there are many things you should aim to do straight away.

Talk about it

Create opportunities to talk to your child in a relaxed environment, sometimes it can be less intense if you go for a walk or a drive rather than sitting face-to-face.

- Stay calm and ask them how you can help
- Ask open questions and listen without judging
- Praise them for talking to you
- Don’t take away their devices unless this is what they want, it’s likely to make them angry and increase feelings of sadness and isolation

If your child is upset by something they’ve experienced online but seems to be handling the situation then advice you can give includes:

- It may be tempting but don't retaliate. This can have unpredictable consequences, can make arguments last longer and make it harder to see who's in the wrong.
- Shut down arguments online before they take hold. Try not to involve lots of others in online arguments. This includes being careful what they post, what they share, and knowing when to leave a group chat or change the conversation.
- Ask people to take down hurtful or offensive content. Your child may be successful by simply being honest about how they feel, particularly if the perpetrator didn't mean to cause them harm.

Tips to remember

Your child is the most important person – make sure their needs and wants remain central.

Keep calm – remember the school may not be aware of what's happening. Ask to see child's teacher, tutor, or year head.

Bring evidence – keep a record of events and any evidence, such as printouts of screenshots, saved messages.

Be goal orientated – the priority is for the bullying to stop. Consider practical ways that the school can help, for example, talking to students involved or providing your child with support.

Set date and time to follow up – make sure you leave the meeting or phone call with an agreed day or time to check in on progress made.