

Cyberbullying

Young children

Cyberbullying occurs when the internet, email or mobile phones are used to deliberately and repeatedly engage in hostile behaviour to harm someone.

Cyberbullying is less common between young children with the likelihood of a child being involved in cyberbullying increasing with age. Cyberbullying can have negative academic, social and psychological outcomes for children, so providing support for children who are involved in cyberbullying is critical.

For young children, general internet safety tips are a good starting point to help them to develop appropriate online etiquette and to learn appropriate responses to bullying behaviours. The following tips can help you to manage cyberbullying with your child.

- At this age children's internet use should still be closely monitored. To help with this try to keep the computer in a shared or visible place in the home.
- Keep your child connected online and offline to friends and family that they trust. This helps to protect them from potentially negative outcomes.
- Help your child understand that what they say and do online is important. Encourage your child to use the same manners, communicate with others in the same way and report others who aren't being nice, just as they would in the offline world.
- Advise your child not to respond to any negative messages and to report any negative messages they receive to you or another trusted adult.
- If your child has passwords for their online activities advise your child never to share their password with friends—friendships may be shortlived at this age and former friends can mis-use passwords to cyberbully.
- If your child has been involved in cyberbullying and seems distressed or shows changes in behaviour or mood it may be advisable to seek professional support, including through the Cybersmart Online Helpline at www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx. The Cybersmart Online Helpline provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people. Your child's schools may also be able to provide support and guidance.
- If there is a threat to your child's safety the police can help. In life threatening and time critical situation call Triple Zero (000).

More information

The Cybersmart program provides a range of cybersafety materials for parents and their children. For more information, resources, advice and tips, visit the Cybersmart website at www.cybersmart.gov.au. Encourage your children and teens to take a look around the website. If you have young children, you may like to explore it together to help them understand how to protect themselves against online risks and make the most of their experiences online.