



Cyberbullying: Parent Tips for All Kids

- **Teach your kids empathy**
 - Nothing drives home a point faster than walking a mile in someone else's shoes. If your kids truly understand what someone else is going through, they're less likely to bully someone -- or passively witness others being bullied.
- **Explain the basics of correct cyber behavior**
 - Tell your kids that things like lying, telling secrets, and being mean still hurt even if it's only said through a screen.
- **Help kids understand the line between funny and cruel**
 - Kids' online communication is often purposely ambiguous or accidentally cruel -- both of which can lead to misunderstandings. If drama starts brewing, ask your kid to call or speak face to face with their friend to clear it up.
- **Make sure they talk to someone (even if it's not you)**
 - As children grow developmentally, their circle of friends and trusted adults widens. Kids need a responsible adult to confide in -- their school counselor, their music teacher, even the parent of a friend. Talk to your kid about who they can go to if trouble is brewing.
- **Help your kid be an upstander -- not a bystander (25)**
 - Kids are hesitant to get involved, fearing the bully might turn his/her sights on them. But there are ways to allow your kid to work behind the scenes to reach out to the victim, get an adult involved, and prevent more cruel behavior.
- **Show your kid how to stop it**
 - Tell kids not to respond or retaliate. Not feeding the bully can stop the cycle. And -- if anything does happen -- save the evidence.
- **Ask your kids if they know someone who has been cyberbullied**
 - Sometimes they will open up about others' pain before admitting their own.
- **Establish consequences for bullying behavior**
 - If your children contribute to degrading and humiliating people, tell them their phone and computer privileges will be taken away.

(Common Sense Media, 2011) (Knorr, 2011)

Cyberbullying: Parent Tips for Elementary School Kids

- **Limit online socializing**
 - Because there is more risk for bullying on sites where kids can openly communicate, avoid open and free chat sites and look for those that offer pre-scripted or prescreened chat options, like Webkinz or Club Penguin.



- **Explain the basics of good behavior online**
 - Remind your kids that being mean, lying, and telling secrets hurts — both online and offline. And remember to praise your child when you see good behavior.
- **Remind them not to share passwords with friends**
 - A common form of cyberbullying is when kids share passwords, log on to another child's account, and pretend to be that person. Kids can protect themselves by learning that passwords are strictly private and should be shared only with their parents.
- **Make sure they talk to someone (even if it's not you)**
 - A child should tell a parent, teacher, or trusted adult if he or she is being bullied online. Tell your child that this isn't tattling, it's standing up for him- or herself.
- **Advise them on how to handle cyberbullying**
 - Even though they might be tempted to, your child should never retaliate against a cyberbully. They can stop the cycle by not responding to the bully. Also remind them to save the evidence rather than delete it.

Cyberbullying: Parent Tips for Middle School Kids

- **Monitor their use**
 - See what they're posting, check their text messages, and let them know you're keeping an eye on their activities.
- **Tell your kids what to do if they're harassed**
 - They shouldn't respond or retaliate, they should block bullies immediately, and they should tell you or an adult they trust. They shouldn't delete the messages because in persistent cases, the content should be reported to a cell or internet service provider.
- **If your kid is doing the bullying, establish strict consequences**
 - And stick to them. That goes for cruel or sexual comments about teachers, friends, and relatives.
- **Remind them that all private information can be made public**
 - Posts on friends' walls, private messages, intimate photos, little inside jokes can all be cut, pasted, and sent around. If they don't want the world to see it, they'd better not post or send it.
- **Teach them not to start what they don't want to finish**
 - Chatting in online games and virtual worlds can get ugly fast. Make sure your kids are respectful, because hurtful retaliation happens all the time.

(Common Sense Media, 2011)

Cyberbullying: Parent Tips for High School Kids

- **Tell them to think before they reveal**
 - At this age, kids experiment with all sorts of activities, many of which should not be made public. Remind your teens that anything they post can be misused by someone else.
- **Remind them they aren't too old to ask you for help**



- There are things some kids can handle on their own, but sometimes, they just need help. Coming to their parents isn't baby-ish; it's safe.
- **Recognize context**
 - Cyberbullying is often not thought of as "cyberbullying" to the teens involved. Even though an incident has a history, a story, and nuance, rather than referring to it as "cyberbullying," try the words "digital cruelty," "abuse," or "being mean" online.
- **Help teens understand when behavior crosses the line**
 - Help your teen tune into his or her own feelings. If they feel emotionally or physically scared, it's time to get help.
- **Encourage empathy**
 - Help teens understand the detrimental impact of cyberbullying on people who are targeted, now and later in life. Encourage them to listen to victims and to become their allies.
- **Be realistic**
 - Teens have their own social dynamics that often don't include parents, so helping them directly may be difficult. Encourage teens to find friends or other trusted adults to help them through the situation, even if it's not you. Websites are often slow to respond, if they respond at all, but reporting an incident to a website administrator can be an empowering step.
- **Remember that your teen might be the bully**
 - Teens can take different roles in cyberbullying at different times. A teen who is cyberbullied might turn around and cyberbully someone else to regain a feeling of power. Ask questions to understand what role or roles your teens are playing.
- **Tell them to disengage**
 - Encourage your teens to ignore and block the bully and even log off the computer for a while. Point out that cyberbullies are often just looking for attention and status, so don't let them know that their efforts have worked.

(Common Sense Media, 2011) (Perle, 2011)

