Cyberbullying

ℹ️ This factsheet explains cyberbullying and includes tips for parents and carers to manage this issue.

❝ Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intention to hurt them psychologically, socially or physically.

— Office of the eSafety Commissioner

THINK U KNOW .org.au

Parents and carers need to take immediate action if their child is involved with cyberbullying.

WHAT DOES CYBERBULLYING LOOK LIKE?

Cyberbullying can include using instant messaging, social networking sites, blogs, online games, phone calls, video calls and SMS or MMS to;

> post or share embarrassing videos or images of others

> exclude or intimidate others online

> repeatedly send threatening messages or harassing others online

> send or share hurtful or abusive messages or emails

> participate in nasty online gossip or chat

WHY DO PEOPLE CYBERBULLY?

People might cyberbully others because they:

> think it's amusing

> don't like the person

> think "it's just words"

> don't believe there are any consequences

> think they can remain anonymous

> are doing it in retaliation

None of these reasons, or any others, can justify cyberbullying.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING?

Things that happen on the internet or mobile phones can have offline consequences. The emotional and psychological impact of cyberbullying can be devastating for victims. Some of the effects of cyberbullying may be:

> changes in personality, becoming withdrawn, angry, anxious or sad

> embarrassment

> decline in performance at school

> loss of self esteem

> retaliating or revenge bullying

> in extreme cases, may make people feel like they don't want to go on

Cyberbullying hurts people. It can ruin lives. There are laws which apply to serious online harassment and online bullying.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD IF THEY ARE BEING BULLIED?

> Collect the evidence, keep text messages, print emails, take screen shots for submitting a report

> Block and report cyberbullying to the website, app or social media platform

> **The Office of the eSafety Commissioner** can help you remove serious cyberbullying material if it is not removed by the social networking site within 48 hours of making a report

> Change your privacy settings

> Encourage your child to take some time out from online activities and manage screen time

> Most schools have a cyberbullying policy in place and should be able to provide support where there is a connection to the school or students

> Seek advice from professional support services

While each cyberbullying case is different, taking away the technology may make young people feel like they are being punished and can prevent them from coming to you with issues in the future. Social connectedness is an important factor in coping.

WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS CYBERBULLYING?

It's important that as a parent or carer, you consider that there are circumstances in which your child may be online bullying, even if it's in retaliation.

> Young people may not always be aware that their actions are cyberbullying

> Talk to your child about their behaviour and the importance of being respectful to others online and offline

> Encourage your child to read comments out loud before posting

Most importantly, know where you can go for help!

SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE:

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800

Lifeline
13 11 14

ReachOut
www.au.reachout.com

Youth Beyond Blue
www.youthbeyondblue.com

Office of the eSafety Commissioner
www.esafety.gov.au

The website or application that you were using at the time