



Cyber Bullying



Cyber-bullying has become widespread. The following general tips are important for parents.



Maureen Griffin from MGMS Training talks about cyber-bullying and your child.

- 1: What is Cyber-Bullying?
- 2: Why does Cyber-Bullying happen?
- 3: How do I know if my child is being Cyber-Bullied?
- 4: What to do if your child is being Cyber-Bullied

No.1

What is Cyber-Bullying?

Cyber-Bullying is defined as:

“any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others ” (*Tokunaga, 2010*)

It differs from traditional forms of bullying in 3 main ways :

- a. There is a larger audience
- b. There are no time or location barriers – it is now 24/7
- c. It reduces empathy as the victims reaction is often not seen

No.2

Why does Cyber-Bullying happen?

Cyber-Bullying can happen for any number of reasons including:

- a. As a joke (don't think about how it feels for the other person)
- b. Think that everybody Cyber-Bullies
- c. Think that they won't get caught –an anonymous way of 'getting at' someone
- d. Jealousy/ Revenge
- e. Own issues –home, family, school, friends, self, etc.
- f. To be part of the group/Being dared by others to do so
- g. Learned behaviour –home environment where bullying behaviour is deemed acceptable

No.3

How do I know if my child is being Cyber-Bullied?

Every child deals with bullying differently but the following are some signs to watch out for:

- a. Child appears stressed/upset when online or using their phone
- b. Child withdraws from family and friends
- c. Child may be reluctant to attend school and social activities
- d. Child may exhibit signs of low self-esteem, frustration, anger, hopelessness, depression, fear
- e. Inability to concentrate at school
- f. Child feels suspicious of others –particularly true in cases of anonymous Cyber-Bullying
- g. Child stops eating or has difficulty sleeping
- h. In serious cases child engages in self-harm

No.4

What to do if your child is being Cyber-Bullied

- a. Confirm that you are dealing with bullying behaviour –having a fight with a friend is a normal part of growing up and this can often lead to nasty texts etc.
- b. Remind the child that it is not their fault –It is the person doing the bullying that’s got the problem
- c. Encourage them not to reply to the sender. **Do not reply on your child’s behalf.**
- d. Keep a copy of the content by taking screen shots
- e. Block the sender/remove them as a friend
- f. Report problems to the website/mobile phone company
- g. Report to the school and in serious cases report to the Gardaí

No.5

More Information

a. Irish hotline for public to report child pornography and other illegal content on the internet.
www.hotline.ie

b. Website of the Office for Internet Safety
www.internetsafety.ie