

Cyberbullying

What it is and what to do when things go wrong



Have you ever logged online and worried about what might be there? Do ongoing comments and rumours in a group chat make you angry and upset? Maybe someone posted an image of you online that others found funny, but left you feeling embarrassed or ashamed?

If this has ever happened to you, this is cyberbullying and it's never OK.



This guide will help you:

- ✓ Understand what cyberbullying is
- ✓ Know what to do if it happens to you or a mate
- ✓ Report cyberbullying
- ✓ Find more help when you need it



Cyberbullying is hurtful and can have long lasting impacts on mental and physical health.

What does cyberbullying look like?

Cyberbullying is when someone uses the internet to be mean to another person so they feel bad or upset.¹ It can happen in apps, games, social media, or text messages and voice calls. Cyberbullying can take many different shapes.

Some examples include:

- Sending mean messages
- Spreading rumours
- Creating fake accounts in someone's name to mock them
- Sharing photos or videos of someone without permission to embarrass them
- Posting comments online to provoke an argument or emotional reaction
- Threatening violence over voice calls or in group chats
- Making fun of someone's personal attributes, like their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or how they look
- Purposely leaving someone out



If you or a friend are experiencing cyberbullying, it's really important to tell someone.



How should I respond to a cyberbully?

- ✓ Tell a trusted adult, parent or teacher
- ✓ If it's safe, respond to the bully and let them know that what they're doing is not OK
- ✓ Avoid reacting with mean comments yourself
- ✓ Don't forward or share offensive or harmful content
- ✓ Block, unfriend or unfollow the bully
- ✓ Delete your account and start another that has trusted contacts, be sure to collect evidence before deleting your account

¹ [Bullying online | eSafety Commissioner](#)

How can I help a friend that's being cyberbullied?

If you see things that you are not OK with, you can stand up to cyberbullying.



Support

Message the person directly to check if they are OK and offer support.



Feedback

Send a private message to the person being mean to let them know it's not OK.



Respond

Post a public reply to the cyberbullying.



Seek help

Let a trusted adult know.



Report

Report the cyberbullying to the social media, gaming site or app.



A bystander is...

Someone who sees something wrong happening but ignores it.



An upstander is...

Someone who sees something wrong and says or does something about it.

What can I do to help protect myself from cyberbullying?



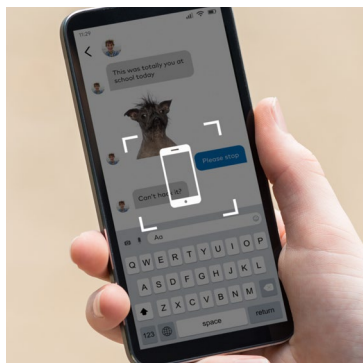
Cyberbullies sometimes try to hack your account or set up a fake account to pretend to be you. Protect yourself by:

- ✓ Creating strong passphrases and using MFA (where available) for all your online accounts
- ✓ Not sharing your login details with anyone
- ✓ Not sharing too much personal information about yourself in public

How to report cyberbullying

Most apps and games have community guidelines around what behaviour is and isn't OK, as well as how to use reporting tools.

Tell a parent or trusted adult and together you can:



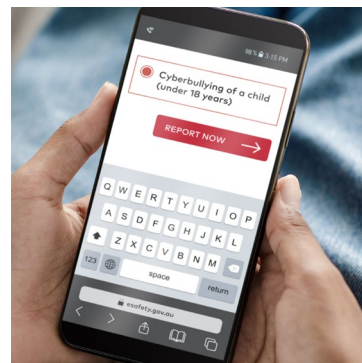
Collect

Grab evidence such as screenshots or screen records of the hurtful messages or images, usernames or profiles, and time and date of harmful behaviour.



Submit

Send your evidence to the site and allow 48 hours for a response.



Escalate

If they don't respond or remove the offending content or user, submit a report to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

Reports can be done online by you or a parent or guardian.

Image-based abuse

If someone is threatening to share, or has shared, nudes or intimate images or private images of you they are committing a crime – even if they are also under 18 years.

You can report and find out more at:

[Someone is threatening to share my nudes | eSafety Commissioner.](#)



What to do if you need more help?

If you ever feel anxious, angry or sad about an online experience, you should let someone you trust know what's going on. Tell:

- a friend
- a parent
- a teacher
- a trusted adult
- [Kids Helpline](#)

About Optus Digital Thumbprint

Optus Digital Thumbprint supports digital safety and wellbeing for young people and families. Find out more at www.digitalthumbprint.com.au

