

Cyberbullying and online harassment

Cyberbullying and online harassment can be extremely distressing. They can be even be classed as criminal offences in some cases.

However, there are plenty of organisations you can turn to for help, including charities, social media service providers, and the police

Here's an overview of what online bullying is, how you can avoid it, and where you go for advice:

What is cyberbullying and online harassment?

Making comments or posts online that are deliberately abusive, offensive, threatening, or inflammatory.

Liking and sharing this kind of abuse can also count as bullying and harassment.

Online bullies and harassers use all sorts of platforms, including social media (like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram), forums, gaming sites, comments sections, mobile phone chat groups and more.

There's a very detailed definition of cyberbullying at:
bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-is-cyberbullying/

How you can stay safer

Think before you post: when posting or commenting online, consider what you say and what effect it may have. Never post comments that are abusive, threatening or are likely to cause offence to others.

Keep personal information personal: do not say anything or publish pictures that might later cause you or someone else embarrassment. Be aware of what friends post about you, or how they reply to your posts – particularly about your personal details and activities.

Make the most of privacy settings: keep your profiles closed, allowing access only to your chosen friends and family.

Social media help sections can show you how to block users, change your privacy and contact settings, and report abusive content:

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/help/>
- Twitter - <https://support.twitter.com/>
- Instagram - <https://help.instagram.com/>
- LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin>
- Google+ - <https://support.google.com/plus#topic=6320382>

- YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/en-GB/reporting.html>
- Pinterest - <https://help.pinterest.com/en>
- Tumblr - <https://www.tumblr.com/abuse>
- Snapchat - <https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB>

Report cyberbullying to internet service providers: lots of content online is offensive or upsetting. It's not always a criminal offence, but it often violates the terms and conditions established by social media sites and internet service providers. Service providers are often keen to take action against users who abuse their terms of service.

If you believe that you are the victim of online bullying, keep a record of the content (for example, take a screenshot). You can use this to help your report to the service provider and, if necessary, the police.