

Bullying- what is it?

Bullying is repetitive behaviour that is intended to inflict harm – physically, psychologically – and involves someone exerting power over someone else: the victim is often targeted as they are seen as different or vulnerable in some way.

Cyberbullying- how does it differ from in-person bullying?

Cyberbullying is carried out by means of an electronic device and using the internet or digital messaging. It usually accompanies in-person bullying. Bullies can send messages which can be read at any time by their intended target... It can feel like there is no escape!

What does the law say?

Cyberbullying (and bullying generally) is not a crime in itself, but bullying behaviours can be:

Malicious Communication – Messages that are sent with the intention of causing distress or anxiety

Harassment – More than one message that causes distress or anxiety is received

Defamation – Making false statements which damage someone's character

Improper use of the public electronic communications network – Examples would be: grossly offensive material, or content that the sender knows to be false, is sent

Hate crime – Bullying statements are made about someone's race, gender, sexuality, religion, or disability

How do I speak to my child about their life online and cyberbullying?

Even if your child has not been bullied, it's a good idea to talk to them about their life online and how to stay safe. Doing so will indicate to them that you are there to support them should they need help. The Antibullying Alliance has produced [advice for parents and carers](#) which holds a lot of information, including [addressing worries about cyberbullying](#) and a leaflet about [how to talk to your child about healthy online relationships](#).

If my child tells me they are being cyberbullied, what can I do?

First of all, stay calm and reassure your child that you are there to help, and that it's not their fault that they are being bullied.

If you feel that your child is in immediate danger – for example, the messages contain threats of immediate harm – dial 999.

Do not delete any of the messages that have been received. Cyberbullying is usually easier to investigate than in-person bullying as messages can be saved and can usually be tracked back to the sender.

If it's not urgent, report a crime (refer to the 'What does the law say?' section above if you're not sure) via [our website](#) or by calling 101

For further advice, use the Anti-bullying Alliance's [Information tool for parents and carers](#). This is a click-through guide which includes modules on 'what to do if you think/know your child is being bullied', and 'What should the school be doing?' There is also guidance about what to do if you think your child is bullying others.

There are a number of organisations that can offer support, too:

[Anti-Bullying Alliance - Sources of information, advice and support](#)

The NSPCC have a helpline (phone and online) for parents and carers who have concerns: [Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

[Childline - Bullying and cyberbullying](#)

For your child to get support for themselves. Childline are available to talk to on the phone or online.

[CEOP Education](#)

Resources and information for professionals, families and children that help to protect children and young people from online sexual abuse.