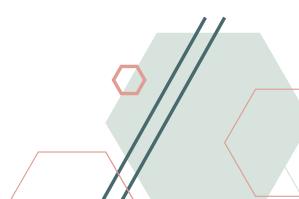


# CYBERBULLYING + ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE

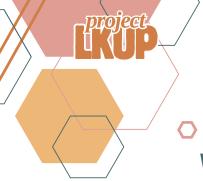
Online Safety Toolkit: Protecting Our Kids in a Digital World

A free resource for families, educators, and kids — all the guidance, conversation prompts, and tools you need to stay safe, connected, and resilient online.





- ✓ SET PARENTAL CONTROLS & PRIVACY SETTINGS ON ALL DEVICES
- KEEP SCREENS (PHONES/TABLETS)
  OUT OF BEDROOMS
- ✓ CREATE A FAMILY TECH AGREEMENT (DOWNLOAD PROJECT LKUP'S AGREEMENT FOR FREE TODAY!)
- ✓ CHECK IN REGULARLY NOT ONLY WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM
- REMIND YOUR CHILD: IF
  SOMETHING FEELS WRONG ONLINE, IT
  PROBABLY IS



# WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING AND WHY IT MATTERS

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place via digital technologies — phones, computers, tablets — and includes social media, texting, messaging apps, gaming platforms, email, etc.

It is an intentional, repeated, harmful behavior, often targeting someone who cannot easily defend themselves in that context.

Because it happens online, it can be instantaneous, anonymous (or pseudonymous), and has a wide reach (can spread quickly) with lasting records (screenshots, etc.).

It differs from "one-time mean comments" in that it is sustained or repeated and involves a power dynamic (real or perceived) over time.

Because of its digital nature, cyberbullying can reach victims even when "away from school,"

making escape harder.

The digital trail (screenshots, logs) can serve both as evidence and means of further harm (e.g. resharing) if not handled carefully.



# WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING AND WHY IT MATTERS

In 2025, 26.5% of U.S. teens (ages 13-17) reported being cyberbullied (within a recent time period)

'https://explodingtopics.com/blog/cyberbullying-stats

ABOUT 32% OF TEEN GIRLS HAVE EXPERIENCED TWO OR MORE TYPES OF ONLINE HARASSMENT; ~24% OF TEEN BOYS REPORT MULTIPLE TYPES.

\*HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/INTERNET/2022/12/15/TEENS-AND-CYBERBULLYING-2022

IN A 2021 NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE STUDY, 45.5% OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SAID THEY HAD BEEN CYBERBULLIED IN THEIR LIFETIME; 23.2% INDICATED BEING CYBERBULLIED IN THE LAST 30 DAYS.

\*https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/cyberbullying/

- Cyberbullying can lead to trauma symptoms, including symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Emotional effects include anxiety, depression, sadness, low self-esteem, social withdrawal, changes in sleep or eating, headaches, stomachaches, and academic decline.
- Victims of cyberbullying are at higher risk for suicidal ideation and self-harm.
- Because the harassment can follow them home (i.e. "no safe zone"), the stress may be more constant than in-person bullying.
- In schools, having strong anti-bullying policies is associated with reductions in depression and suicidal behaviors among teens.



# REAL EXAMPLES OF CYBERBULLYING



#### 1. GROUP CHAT EXCLUSION

A student is part of a class group chat. Without explanation, the others remove them from the chat, change the group name, and post messages mocking them. The student doesn't find out until others text them asking why they're not in the group anymore.

#### 2.IMPERSONATION / FAKE ACCOUNT

Someone creates a fake social media account in a child's name, posts embarrassing or mean things, then pressures the real child to take responsibility or apologize.

#### 3. MEAN OR THREATENING MESSAGES

A teen receives repeated direct messages: "No one likes you," "You should leave school," or threats about revealing personal information. The messages come at different times, making the recipient anxious to check their phone.

# 4.AFTER A MINOR DISAGREEMENT, SCREENSHOTS FROM A PRIVATE CONVERSATION ARE SHARED PUBLICLY WITH MOCKING COMMENTS.

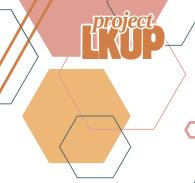
#### 5. RUMORS AND FALSE STORIES ONLINE

A false rumor is posted on a class's social media page, detailing embarrassing (false) personal information. The post spreads quickly, and people comment, like, or reshare without verifying.

#### 6.PERSISTENT HARASSMENT ACROSS PLATFORMS

A student is harassed via messaging, then in comments on social media, then via email and sometimes in multiplayer games — a "multi-front" harassment.





# HOW TO DETECT CYBERBULLYING

(AND TEACH YOUR CHILD NOT TO BECOME A BULLY)

Cyberbullying isn't just "kids being kids" online — it's real emotional harm, and it leaves real scars.

Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can happen 24/7, hidden behind screens, often without adults noticing until it's too late.

As parents, we need to stay alert for signs that our child might be a target — and just as importantly, teach them how not to accidentally become a participant.

Cyberbullying often shows up in subtle ways before it escalates. Watch for these signs:

#### PEMOTIONAL CHANGES AFTER SCREEN TIME:

Your child seems sad, angry, withdrawn, or anxious after using their device.

#### AVOIDING DEVICES:

Suddenly doesn't want to check their phone, or seems tense when notifications pop up.

#### CHANGES IN FRIEND GROUPS:

Pulls away from usual friends, or suddenly has conflict with a friend group without clear explanation.

#### **PSECRETIVE BEHAVIOR:**

Hides screens quickly, deletes conversations, or becomes defensive when asked about online activity.

# PDECLINE IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OR INTEREST IN HOBBIES:

Cyberbullying can damage self-esteem and cause kids to disengage from other areas of life.

#### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:

Headaches, stomachaches, trouble sleeping — often connected to emotional distress.



# " P WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT CYBERBULLYING

#### STAY CALM AND OPEN.

Avoid reacting with immediate anger or demands. Your child needs to feel safe coming to you.

#### TRY:

- "I've noticed you seem a little different lately after using your phone. I'm here to help, not to get anyone in trouble. Can you tell me what's been going on?"
- PListen Without Judgment:
  Even if what you hear is painful, stay steady. Thank them for trusting you.
- Document Evidence:

If there are harmful messages, screenshots, or posts, save them. You may need this later for reporting to schools, platforms, or authorities.

Report and Block:

Use platform tools to report bullying. Block the offending users. Most social media and gaming platforms now have built-in reporting systems.

Involve the School (When Needed):

If the cyberbullying involves classmates, alert the school counselor or administrator. Schools are increasingly equipped to handle digital harassment issues.

Provide Support — and Outside Help if Needed:

If your child is deeply impacted, consider working with a therapist who understands online social dynamics and trauma.



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT NOT BECOMING A CYBERBULLY

Many kids unintentionally cross the line from "joking" to hurting others online — especially when group chats, memes, or teasing get out of hand.

#### HERE'S WHAT THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU:

#### 1. INTENT VS. IMPACT MATTERS

"Even if you meant something as a joke, if it hurt someone else, it matters." Kids often say, "But I was just kidding!"

Teach them that how the other person feels is what matters, not just what they intended.

#### 2. KINDNESS COUNTS - EVEN IN GROUP CHATS

"The easiest place to be mean is where you think no one will notice." Group texts, private DMs, and gaming chats can become breeding grounds for exclusion, teasing, and ganging up.

Encourage your child to be the upstander — the one who says, "Hey, that's not cool," or simply refuses to pile on.

#### 3. DON'T FORWARD IT, DON'T SHARE IT

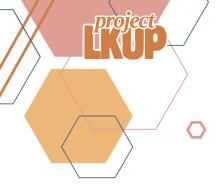
"If someone sends you something mean, even about someone else — don't forward it. Don't 'like' it. Don't keep it going."

Teach them that passive participation still causes harm.

#### 4. THINK BEFORE YOU POST

"Before you hit send, ask yourself: Would I be okay if this was said about me?"

Simple moments of pause can prevent major harm.



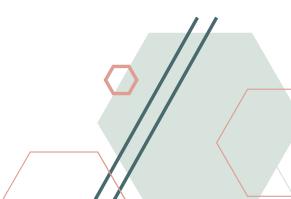


## RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR



If you see these signs, step in gently with conversation, not blame.

- SUDDEN SECRECY ABOUT DEVICES
- MOOD CHANGES AFTER SCREEN
  TIME
- NEW "FRIENDS" THEY WON'T EXPLAIN
- DELETING MESSAGES, APPS, HISTORY OFTEN
- OVERSHARING OR RISKY BEHAVIOR ONLINE







### CONVERSATION STARTERS

Stay curious. Stay interested. Stay open an available. Always thank your child for sharing.

# FOR ONLINE SAFETY:

"WHAT'S SOMETHING COOL YOU'VE SEEN ONLINE LATELY — AND SOMETHING THAT MADE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE?"

"IF A FRIEND WAS BEING BULLIED ONLINE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?"

"HAS ANYONE YOU DON'T KNOW EVER MESSAGED YOU OR TRIED TO ADD YOU? WHAT DO YOU SAY/DO WHEN YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?

# $\bigcirc$

### FOR DIGITAL BEHAVIOR:

"WHAT'S YOUR RULE FOR WHAT'S OKAY TO POST?"

"IF YOU EVER FEEL STUCK ONLINE, WHO WOULD YOU TURN TO?"

"DO YOU EVER WISH YOU COULD UNPLUG?"





# HOW TO RESPOND TO ONLINE HARMS

STAY CALM listen first, react later

SAVE EVIDENCE (screenshots, usernames, messages)

BLOCK/REPORT THE USER ON THE PLATFORM

ALERT SCHOOL STAFF if it involves classmates

INVOLVE LAW ENFORECEMENT If threats, sextortion, or predatory behavior are involved

#### PROVIDE COUNSELING

if your child shows signs of anxiety, depression, or trauma

WWW.PROJECTLKUP.ORG @PROJECTLKUP





# GROOMING & SEXTORTION AWARENESS GUIDE

#### SIGNS OF GROOMING:

- FAST TRUST-BUILDING
- REQUESTS FOR SECRECY "Don't tell your parents"
- BOUNDARY TESTING

  Asking for photos, personal info
- EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION OR THREATS

#### PROTECTION STEPS:

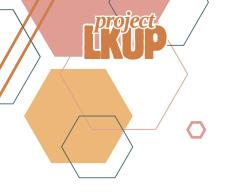
• TEACH KIDS NEVER TO SEND PRIVATE PHOTOS

even to "trusted" friends

• TALK ABOUT "TRICKY PEOPLE" not just "stranger danger

• ENCOURAGE AND MODEL OPENNESS "You won't be in trouble if you tell me"







# EMERGENCY CONTACTS CHEAT SHEET

- 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE (CALL OR TEXT)
- NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN (NCMEC): 1-800-THE-LOST
- CYBERTIPLINE FOR ONLINE EXPLOITATION:
   WWW.CYBERTIPLINE.ORG
- SCHOOL COUNSELOR / LOCAL THERAPIST —

(fill in for your area)



### **ONLINE SAFETY**

# DANGEROUS APPS **WATCHLIST:**

#### WHY IT'S RISKY

NOTES



SNAPCHAT

DISAPPEARING MESSAGES CREATE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY; EASE OF SENDING PRIVATE PHOTOS; "SNAP MAP" CAN REVEAL LOCATION

PREDATORS MAY EXPLOIT THE BELIEF THAT CONTENT VANISHES; USERS MAY STILL SCREENSHOT OR SAVE.



TIKTOK

ALGORITHMIC PUSH TOWARD EXTREME CONTENT, COMMENTS AND DMS FROM STRANGERS, VIRAL CHALLENGES THAT ENCOURAGE RISKY BEHAVIOR

KIDS MAY GET NUDGED TOWARD CONTENT BEYOND THEIR MATURITY LEVEL. CONTRIBUTES TO SCREEN ADDICTION.



INSTAGRAM

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT, DIRECT MESSAGING WITH STRANGERS, ALGORITHM SURFACING RISKY CONTENT

EVEN WITH A "PRIVATE" PROFILE. CONTENT SEARCHES OR TAGS MAY BYPASS FILTERS. CONTRIBUTES TO SCREEN ADDICTION



YOUTUBE

EASY ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE OR HARMFUL CONTENT; ALGORITHM CAN PUSH KIDS TOWARD EXTREME, VIOLENT, OR SEXUAL MATERIAL; ADDICTIVE SHORT-FORM SCROLL DESIGN SIMILAR TO TIKTOK

KIDS TO JOIN LARGE GROUP CHATS WITH

VOICE NOTES, AND LIVE LOCATION

COMMENT SECTIONS CAN EXPOSE KIDS TO BULLYING, PREDATORS, OR SCAMS. WATCH TIME LIMITS AND SUPERVISED ACCOUNTS HELP, BUT DON'T ELIMINATE RISKS.



WHATSAPP

END-TO-END ENCRYPTION MEANS PARENTS IT CAN BE USED FOR CYBERBULLYING IN CAN'T MONITOR CONVERSATIONS; EASY FOR GROUP CHATS, SPREADING HARMFUL CONTENT, OR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS STRANGERS; ALLOWS SHARING OF IMAGES, HIDDEN FROM PARENTS. DISAPPEARING MESSAGES AND STATUS UPDATES ADD



DISCORD

MIXED USER BASE (ADULTS + TEENS), PUBLIC SERVERS, VOICE/TEXT/VIDEO CHANNELS, COMMUNITIES WITH MINIMAL MODERATION

A PLACE WHERE HARMFUL CONTENT, BULLYING, OR GROOMING MAY HIDE INSIDE NICHE SERVERS.

ANOTHER LAYER OF RISK.



KIK

ENABLES CHATTING WITH STRANGERS, WEAK IDENTITY VERIFICATION, RELATIVELY ANONYMOUS MESSAGING

DOESN'T REQUIRE PHONE NUMBER; KIDS CAN BE CONTACTED BY UNKNOWN USERS



OMEGLE

RANDOM VIDEO OR TEXT CHAT WITH STRANGERS, NO ACCOUNTABILITY, HIGH RISK OF EXPLICIT CONTENT OR PREDATORY BEHAVIOR

MANY SUCH APPS HAVE MINIMAL MODERATION AND ALLOW FULL ANONYMITY



(FORMERLY TWITTER)

MINIMAL CONTENT MODERATION; EXPOSURE TO HATE SPEECH, PORNOGRAPHY, VIOLENT CONTENT, SCAMS, AND PREDATORY ACCOUNTS

KIDS CAN EASILY ENCOUNTER HARMFUL MATERIAL. ANONYMOUS ACCOUNTS MAKE HARASSMENT COMMON. DIRECT MESSAGES ARE OPEN UNLESS RESTRICTED, ALLOWING STRANGERS TO CONTACT KIDS. TRENDING TOPICS OFTEN SURFACE INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT QUICKLY.



HIDDEN/VAULT APPS

APPEAR INNOCUOUS BUT HIDE PHOTOS, VIDEOS, APPS, BROWSER HISTORY BEHIND A DECOY INTERFACE

USED TO CONCEAL FILES OR APPS PARENTS WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT.

### **ONLINE SAFETY**



# PARENT REMINDERS

- No devices in bedrooms overnight protect sleep and privacy.
- Set clear "off-hours" for devices (meals, car rides, family time, homework blocks).
- Screens only in shared spaces (living room, kitchen, office
  never behind closed doors)
- Thank your child when they open up even if it's hard to hear. Connection matters more than perfection.
- Connection in person is always the priority real conversations > online ones.
- Know their passwords and apps not to snoop, but to stay accountable together.
- Teach "device check-ins" kids hand you their phone randomly once in a while; keeps the norm of openness.
- Model boundaries yourself put your own phone down when your child talks to you.
- Use family agreements as living documents revisit rules as kids grow, don't just set them once.
- Pause before reacting if you see something upsetting online, respond calmly so your child keeps coming to you.

### **ONLINE SAFETY**



# PARENT REMINDERS

- Screens don't replace responsibilities homework, chores, and sleep come first.
- Jech-free rituals family dinner, bedtime routine, weekend activities, or Sunday afternoons without screens.
- Remind: what happens online is real feelings, harm, and risks are just as serious as in-person life.
- Prioritize offline joy boredom, play, creativity, and outdoor time are essential for resilience.





# CYBERBULLYING + ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE

Cyberbullying is preventable — when kids feel empowered, not just policed. By teaching them to recognize harm, own their impact, and stay brave enough to speak up, we're helping them build stronger friendships — and a healthier online world. Start with conversation. Stay with compassion. Because what happens online is real — and real support can make all the difference.

By creating boundaries with our devices, we make space for clarity, calm, and connection.

