



R U LEGAL? CYBER BULLYING

Going online or on your phone is a great way to have fun with your friends, but you must be careful how you treat others.

Things you say and do online can really hurt people. There are also laws about how you can behave in the online world, and the penalties for breaking them are serious. It's really important to think before you send a message or share something online.

What is cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying is being mean to someone online or over the phone. This includes in text messages, phone calls, direct messages, blogs, chat, social media, gaming and webpages.

Is cyber bullying against the law?

Cyber bullying is never okay, but it can also be against the law and can get you into a lot of trouble.

For example it is against the law to use a phone or the internet to scare, harass or offend someone else.

What types of things are cyber bullying?

Some examples of cyber bullying are:

- Sending mean messages to someone or trolling them on social media.
- Harassing someone through online gaming or in chats.
- Making threats to hurt someone in a phone call, message or using the internet.
- Taking a photo or video of someone in private and sharing it without their permission.
- Posting mean or embarrassing things about someone online, including messages, photos or videos.
- Liking, sharing or commenting on something mean, even if you weren't the person who posted it.
- Repeatedly calling, messaging or emailing someone in a way that makes them feel scared.
- Pretending to be someone else online, or using their name or photo to create a fake account.
- Accessing someone's online accounts without their permission.

All of these types of behaviour can be against the law.

What can happen if you break the law?

If you are 10 or older and you break the law by cyber bullying someone, the police might give you a special warning (called a "caution") or they might charge you with a criminal offence.

If the police charge you, then you will have to go to court. If you agree that you broke the law, or are found guilty, the court will decide on your punishment and you could end up with a criminal record.

What if I don't get in trouble with the police?

Even if you don't get in trouble with the police, cyber bullying can have other serious consequences.

You could really hurt someone else, even if you didn't mean to and you were just joking. You might not even know you've upset them, because you can't see their reaction.

You could get in trouble at school, or with your parents at home, and damage your relationships and friendships.

You also need to consider your digital footprint. This is information other people can find out about you online, including things you have said and done. The things you share online can stick around for a long time (or forever), even if you do your best to delete them.

Before you post or share things online, think about how you want others (like future employers) to see you, and whether you will be proud of your digital footprint in the future.

What can you do if you have cyber bullied someone?

It's not ok to cyber bully someone. No one deserves to be bullied or hurt online and it is important that you stop.

Talk to an adult that you trust

Tell them what you have done so they can help you.

Remove the bullying material

Make sure you delete any mean comments, photos or videos that you have posted online.

Ask other people to remove bullying material

If other people have been involved in the bullying, ask them to remove their mean comments, photos and videos.

Get legal advice

If the police get involved, you should get legal advice before answering any questions or doing a recorded interview.



What can you do if you are being cyber bullied?

If someone is cyber bullying you, remember that it's not your fault and there are things that you can do.

Talk to an adult you trust

Tell them what is happening so they can help you.

Don't respond

Saying something back to the bully may make things worse for you. Sending nasty messages or threats back to them could also get you into trouble too.

Keep evidence

Take a screenshot of what is happening or write down what was said to you.

Block the bully

Block their emails, phone number and social media accounts. You can also change your privacy settings.

Report it

You can report serious cyber bullying to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner or the police.

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