

# Do you know if your child is being Bullied?

... including Cyberbullying

The signs to spot  
and things you can do...



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## What is bullying?

Bullying is *any* behaviour that is deliberate and hurtful and repeated over time:

- It is deliberate in that someone is selected and targeted while others are not.
- It is hurtful in that it is upsetting, annoying, embarrassing, frustrating, undermining, isolating and/or damaging to self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Even little negative things, which would be only slightly upsetting if they happened just once, repeated over and over again can be very hurtful.

While bullying behaviour is hurtful, those deliberately doing it usually do not understand or intend the level of damage it can cause. Bullying is very secretive but there may be clues that indicate that it is happening.

## Signs to watch out for:

Unexpected anxiety about travelling to and from school, unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.

Unexpected deterioration in motivation, concentration, workrate, educational performance or all of these.

Unexpected changes in mood – loss of confidence, growing shyness, withdrawal from friends or from activities.

Unexpected changes in behaviour – stammering, displays of anger, aggressive behaviour, out of character comments.

Unexpected pattern of physical illnesses – stomach/bowel disorders, loss of appetite, vomiting, loss of sleep, nightmares.

Unexplained bruising, cuts or other injury or damaged clothing (though physical bullying that this would indicate would be unusual).

Reluctance/refusal to say what is troubling her/him (due to fear of backlash or fear of involving adults in what seems minor – though it's not).

## Dealing effectively with the problem of bullying:

Some people find it surprising to discover that the problem of bullying can be effectively dealt with:

The Department of Education and Skills is now insisting that schools adopt a new approach and implement a new policy to deal with bullying.

Under its new mandatory "Procedures" it wants pupils better informed about the hurtful nature and unacceptability of bullying behaviour, through an awareness-raising programme, since better informed pupils are less likely to bully others and more likely to report bullying when they see it.

Under its "Procedures" it wants (a) bullying situations to be "resolved," achieving a "win-win" outcome, and (b) relationships to be "restored" to the level before the bullying began and this to be done while at the same time avoiding blame and punishment since these have not worked in the past.

A free website that supports schools in fully implementing this approach can be found at [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)

Pupils, supporting this approach, are for the first time empowered to report bullying to their teachers without fear of any negative backlash.

As a result of this approach, and often for the first time ever, teachers become aware of the bullying behaviour through reports from pupils.

Also as a result of this approach teachers can now handle the bullying situations more effectively, bringing them to a permanent end.

What if the bullying, including cyber-bullying, happens outside of school?

Usually bullying that happens outside of school does not stop at the school gate – it happens in school too.

Often, bullying that happens in school continues outside of school if the same pupils gather, e.g. in sports clubs.

Research shows that most cyber-bullying that happens outside school is simply a follow-on to traditional bullying that is already happening in school.

While a school has no responsibility to deal with bullying that happens outside of school it has an opportunity to intervene to bring the bullying to an end if the bullying happening outside of school is being continued in school or if it is having an impact on the school life of targeted pupils.

## **Protect yourself from cyberbullying by Mobile (Cell) phone.**

Useful tips to help prevent cyberbullying by mobile (cell) phone:

- Always use a password to open your phone for use and tell nobody the password except your parents or guardians.
- Keep your phone number secret from anyone who cannot be totally trusted.
- Never pass someone's phone number on to a third party.
- Do not send pictures of yourself or others or personal messages by phone to anyone who cannot be totally trusted not to pass them on to someone else, someone who may be friendly with them but not with you.

If someone gets your phone number and starts making unwelcome calls or sending unwelcome messages or pictures to you, no matter how annoyed or upset you are do not reply, do not delete the pictures or messages and do not remove a record of the calls from your phone's log. Instead, tell a parent, a teacher or other adult you trust. Then do the following:

To block a texter from sending you unwanted text messages or pictures:

"3 Mobile:" Text... "BLOCK IT START" (in capital letters) to 50216 and follow the instructions you are given to block the number.

Please suggest to your child's teacher/principal to visit the free website at [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)



**Eir:** Call Eir on 1747 (pay as you go) or 1905 (bill pay) and give the number you want blocked. The company will then block the number.

**Vodafone Mobile, An Post Mobile, Tesco Mobile:** Contact the Gardaí (Police) and they will contact the company, which will then block the number.

For children lucky enough to have smart phones:

There is a range of call-blocking, text-blocking and spam-blocking apps available from Play Store and iTunes that you can download free and install on your child's phone.

To block a phone number that is used to send you unwanted phone calls, whether anonymous or not:

(a) Keep a record of the times and dates of the calls (do not delete them from your phone's "call log"), whether you recognise the phone number or not.

(b) If your phone is off or on silent and any audio message is left do not delete this message either.

(c) Contact the Gardaí (Police) and give them the details of times and dates of calls and any audio messages left.

(d) They can then contact the service provider and have the number blocked as well as, if necessary, dealing with the sender.

## **Social Media Anti-Cyber-Bullying Tip:**

Anyone of any age intending to use Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Viber, Ask.fm and Snapchat or other social media in the future should first skip options offered like "Add Friends," "Find Friends," "Profile Information" or "Add a Picture" and instead click on "Settings" - (on Facebook by clicking on the tiny black triangle in the upper right of the screen) and from there limit all privacy and security settings to "friends only" (not friends of friends who may not be your friends) and only then add only genuine trustworthy friends, one at a time. Even then children should avoid circulating photographs of themselves or anyone else on social media or circulating disrespectful comments to anyone about anyone. These remain in the networks and can be misused by others even after you think they are deleted.

For useful "Advice," "Explainers" and "How To" information on many of these social media for both parents and teachers visit [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

## **Useful Contacts - Przydatne Kontakty - Contacts Utiles - Poleznyye Kontakty - Contacte Utile - Teagmhálacha Úsáideacha**

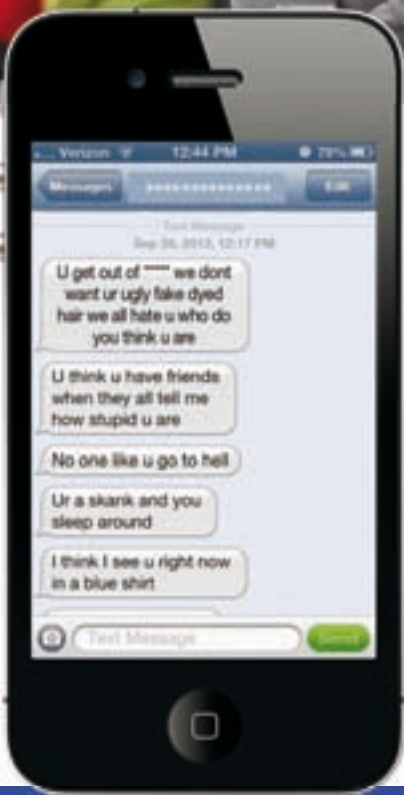
National Parents Council, Primary; Tel: 01-8874477 email: [helpline@ncp.ie](mailto:helpline@ncp.ie)

National Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC); School and Cyber Bullying -  
(which can refer you to a trained counsellor.)

Tel: 01-7006580 Email: [liam.challenor@dcu.ie](mailto:liam.challenor@dcu.ie)

ISPCC: Tel 01 6767960, email: [ispcc@ispcc.ie](mailto:ispcc@ispcc.ie)

Useful Internet safety information: [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)



**Remember!**  
Every text and every social media post is 100% traceable by the Gardaí, working with the service providers.

## Cyberbullying

Online is just another way your child can be bullied. Watch for the signs. For very useful information on Internet safety see [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

## What can I do if I suspect that my child is being bullied?

Don't be angry, be clever. Being angry often makes matters worse and usually does not help resolve the problem. Talk to your child in a calm tone. Reassure your child that the problem lies with the bullying child not your child. Try to find out what is happening but don't be surprised if your child does not want to tell you – don't try to force the issue but offer to help find a "win-win" resolution to end the bullying. Notify the school of your concerns and ask for help – under the new "Procedures" schools can effectively investigate and resolve bullying situations. Under the new "Procedures" parents are obliged to cooperate with any investigation of bullying behaviour the school undertakes so do this.

Cyber-bullying is 100% traceable after the event but by then damage may be done so parents should proactively monitor their childrens' use of electronic media (e.g. phones) and social media and ensure that precautions have been taken (see overleaf) to minimize the risk of cyber-bullying.

## What if my child bullies others?

Do not panic. Your child might do this because: (a) s/he may also be hurting for some reason and is "lashing out," e.g. s/he may have been bullied too and may be "passing this on," (b) s/he may be copying others to keep "in with them" by bullying, (c) there may be a misunderstanding about something said or done in the past that was never sorted out, (d) s/he may feel insecure and be seeking "control" of someone else in order to feel more secure.

Is there something I can do about this? Yes. Under the new "Procedures," once you know about it you can support the school as it implements its new anti-bullying policy – leading to resolution that gives your child a "fresh start" with a "clean sheet" and no blame, in return for making and keeping a promise to stop the bullying. You can then support your child and help her/him to keep this promise by your approval and support for this commitment!

## What if my child observes or knows of others being bullied?

Children who observe or know about a bullying situation but keep silent about it or laugh along or join in help the bullying to continue. They have a responsibility to report it to adults so it can be resolved. You can encourage them to always report bullying to a teacher. If they are reluctant you can report it confidentially yourself. Your child will be happier when the situation is resolved.

***“Bullying is any behaviour that is deliberate and hurtful and repeated over time.”***

**SAVE THIS LEAFLET**  
YOU MAY NEED IT IN THE FUTURE