STOP cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the repeated use of the internet, mobile phones and other technologies to bully, intimidate and humiliate others. It can happen 24/7 and sometimes you may not know who is behind it.

Bullying used to just happen at school. Now, with the use of the internet, mobile phones and other technology, people can be bullied anywhere, including at home and when alone! Cyberbullying might occur through instant messaging (IM), social networking sites, blogs and through online gaming. It can also occur over the phone, by SMS or MMS, or voice and video calls.

Why do people cyberbully?

There are many reasons why people might cyberbully others, including:

- They think it's amusing
- They do not like the person
- They do not consider it to be a big deal, "it's just words"
- They do not believe there are any consequences
- They think they can be anonymous
- They give in to peer pressure

None of these reasons, however, or any others, can justify cyberbullying!

What are the effects of cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying can have serious effects and lasting consequences. Some of the effects of cyberbullying are:

- Anger
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Poor performance at school
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Revenge cyberbullying or retaliation
- Self-harm, even suicide

Cyberbullying hurts people and can ruin lives. There are also legal consequences for harassing or threatening someone online.

What can you do about cyberbullying?

Don't start it!

Cyberbullying is never acceptable. Think before you post something mean, or send someone a hurtful message.

Don't be a part of it!

As a bystander, you can do something to stop cyberbullying. If someone tries to get you involved in cyberbullying, say NO.

Don't let it get out of control!

You need to tell someone if you are being cyberbullied so that you can get help to make it stop.

Stand up!

Be an active bystander and tell a trusted adult if you see cyberbullying occurring.

How can you stay in control?

- Learn how to block and report unwanted communications
- Find out what your school's policy is on cyberbullying
- Research what policies your Internet Service Provider (ISP), online sites, social media and other applications you use have on cyberbullying
- Know whom you can go to for help! Speak to an adult you trust, if something makes you feel uncomfortable.

How can you help your friends?

- Support the person who is being bullied - you never know when you might need help too
- Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult
- Don't forward or pass on any cyberbullying materials such as links to humiliating videos or gossip texts
- Create a positive culture in your school and community which doesn't tolerate bullying in any form