



# How to Handle CYBERBULLYING

HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOLS





## INTRODUCTION

**Cyberbullying is not reduced to insults or jokes online, it spans any repeated, intentional behavior using digital platforms to harm, pressure, isolate or intimidate someone else.**

**Cyberbullying is very different to in-person situations, digital content can spread quickly, be shared without control, and remain accessible for the longer term**

**Cyberbullying isn't always obvious, but is equally harmful. Many of the behaviors taken by the perpetrators are usually dismissed as playful or "jokes", however they are as harmful as in-person abuse from peers, and the damage repeated conducts against a person can cause is very far-reaching.**





## What Cyberbullying Looks Like

**Cyberbullying often does not look obvious at first. It can include:**

- **Repeated negative messages in group chats**
- **Sharing screenshots or private messages without consent**
- **Creating fake accounts to impersonate or mock someone**
- **Excluding someone intentionally from online groups or conversations**
- **Spreading rumors, edited images, or misleading information**
- **Harassment disguised as “jokes” or “just messing around”**

**If a behavior is repeated, targeted, and causes distress, it is not harmless.**



## How it escalates

**Usually, cyberbullying does not start in the extreme, it usually starts as a joke that denigrates an individual's identity, the typical pattern leads to amplification by third parties through actions such as sharing the "joke" outside of the original group, the victim loses control of the situation, and ultimately results in real social or emotional damage.**





# WARNING SIGNS

**Key warning signs of cyberbullying include sudden, intense emotional reactions (anger, sadness, anxiety) during or after using devices, becoming secretive about online activity, and unexpectedly abandoning social media or gaming. Victims may also show withdrawal from friends/family, changes in eating/sleeping habits, and reluctance to attend school or social environments**

## **5-4-3-2-1 Detection**

**The above described events can mean many things, however they usually serve as key indicators staff and educators can use to identify a student in distress.**

5- Anxiety/ Intense emotional reactions

4 Secrecy

3 Withdrawal from social environments

2 Changes in eating

1 Reluctance to attend school



## HOW TO ACT

Take all reports seriously, including early-stage incidents  
Document evidence clearly and consistently  
Address group dynamics, not only individuals  
Provide support to affected students  
Apply consequences consistently and fairly

**EARLY INTERVENTION  
PREVENTS ESCALATION**



# Impact and Consequences

Cyberbullying, alike in-person situations, can cause severe distress and emotional trauma to an individual, unfortunately there are many possible serious consequences for victims of cyberbullying, early detection and intervention is key to prevent escalation to a point where any of the following may become possible.

## Main Consequences:

- Reduced Self-Esteem
- Stress/Anxiety
- Depression and Severe emotional distress
- Panic attacks
- Social Isolation
- Poor Academic Performance
- School Avoidance
- Long-term trauma

And sadly, **SUICIDE**. 50% of youth suicides are connected to bullying/cyberbullying, both of this behaviors can be prevented by parents, educators and professional staff, in the event ANY warning signs could indicate potential suicidal or self-harm from a student, educators must act immediately and act in accordance with local or internal child protection policies, providing support and ensuring safety and stability.



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