

Cyberbullying

Examples of Cyberbullying behaviour are:

- Abusive messages or slagging on Facebook, Twitter etc
- Posting hurtful comments on other peoples videos or posts
- Spreading rumours online
- Hacking into other peoples accounts and sending messages pretending to be them
- Posting offensive images (eg videos or pictures)

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone. Whoever's doing it can act anonymously and say things they would never say in real life. It's important to remember it's just as serious as face-to-face bullying and no one should have to deal with it. Also remember that even if the information is deleted it can be found, and there is always evidence so a cyberbully will generally get caught.

How Can I avoid it?

- Never give out your passwords – always keep your passwords and PIN numbers to yourself, and make a habit of logging out of your email/Facebook page if you're using a public computer.
- Pick your friends carefully – remember whatever you post online can be seen by everyone who's got access to your page or the discussion board. If it's Facebook, only make friends with people you're ok sharing information with.
- Use Netiquette – be polite to other people online. Think about what you're saying and whether it might be hurtful or embarrass them in public, even if it's funny.
- Don't send a message to someone else when you're angry – wait until you've calmed down and had time to think. Once you've sent it, you can't take it back.

How do I deal with it?

- Don't reply – even though you might really want to, don't rise to the bait and reply to messages from someone who's bullying you. They want to know that they've got you worried and upset. Chances are if you never reply they'll get bored and leave you alone.
- Go offline – if you feel like it's invading every bit of your life, remember you can turn off your computer and your phone anytime. Ditch virtual reality for some actual reality for a while.
- Inform your phone company or Internet Service Provider (ISP)– they can block texts, calls or online messages from specific people.
- Change your contact details – get a new user name, a new email address, a new mobile number and only give them to your closest friends. This doesn't mean you're giving in, you're just getting on with your own life.
- Tell someone – if it's bothering you, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to someone about it. If you're worried your parents will freak out, you could talk to a friend, a teacher you trust or a youth worker. Check [face-to-face help](#) for more.
- Inform [the Gardaí](#) – if the messages are ever threatening or it's getting really serious, tell the Gardaí. It's against the law to threaten people, and the Gardaí can put a stop to it. They're there to keep you safe, and they generally want to know about stuff like this.
- Keep a record – you don't have to read the messages, but keep them and keep a record of the time and date. This can act as evidence if you ever need it, and can help the Gardaí or your ISP find out where the messages are coming from.