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What to do if your child is being cyberbullied

Public Safety Canada : 6-8 minutes

Warning signs to look for:

- ▶
Changes in online habits
- ▶
Changes in behavior
- ▶
Emotional, health and well-being changes

What you can do:

Treat cyberbullying seriously while remaining calm. Your child is more likely to open up to you and accept help if you make it clear you are on their side and know what to do. You can take the following steps:

- ▶
Talk with your child about cyberbullying
- ▶
Break off contact with the cyberbully

Document the cyberbullying

Have your child show you all the offending emails, texts and phone messages, social media posts, images and videos, and instant messaging history. Record the dates and times of all incidents and save and print screenshots for reporting.

- ▶
Report the cyberbullying to service providers and social media



Report the cyberbullying to your child's school



Report the cyberbullying to law enforcement



Get help removing sexual images and videos from the internet



Get support from a mental health professional

What you should avoid doing:

Focus on supporting your child when deciding what action to take. To help them move past what can be a painful or embarrassing experience:

- Do not ignore it and hope it goes away. It is important to recognize and respond appropriately to cyberbullying.
- Do not blame your child for being cyberbullied. Even if something they did or said may have triggered the bullying, no child deserves to be bullied.
- Do not criticize your child for not coming to you earlier or for how they handled things. Be supportive of their decision to come to you for help.
- Do not tell your child to retaliate. This may make the situation worse and it tells your child that hurtful behaviour is okay.
- Do not contact the parent of the child that is cyberbullying unless you already know them well. This often makes things worse. Let schools or other authorities help everyone come to a solution that helps all the children involved.