eSafety's parent guide
to cyberbullying and online drama

Summary Sheet

Cyberbullying is sending or sharing seriously threatening, seriously intimidating, seriously harassing or humiliating online content to or about someone under 18.

The behaviour might include abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages or creating fake accounts to trick someone or humiliate them

One in five young Australians aged 8 to 17 years say they have been socially excluded, threatened or abused online.

Helping your child manage devices and accounts

Regularly reviewing settings in apps and on devices can help young people manage online drama and protect their wellbeing. You can support them by encouraging them to do this

Review privacy settings regularly

- Limit or filter comments to help manage negativity online.
- Actively manage who can make contact online by using the tools to mute, restrict, delete or unfriend others for a period of time or permanently.
- Enable wellbeing settings that help track time online and schedule breaks.

Most services provide a parent guide to help you understand the basic settings.

Examples

- TikTok Safety Center for Parents
- YouTube Kids Parental Guide
- The Parent's Guide to Snapchat - ConnectSafely
- A Parent's Guide to Instagram - Reachout.com
- Tips for parents on helping your teen stay safe on Discord

Building social and emotional skills

Cyberbullying is often an extension of face-to-face bullying. Talk regularly to young people about their relationships, including what happens online. Start the chat by asking some key questions:

- What do you do if you feel frustrated or angry about something happening online?
- What would you do if you saw someone harassing a friend?
- What can you do if you feel like someone is trying to make you look bad online?

Young and eSafe has practical advice and videos for young people. The resource covers topics such as respect, responsibility, empathy, resilience, and critical thinking.

You can also use our conversation starters to help with a range of online safety topics.

Supporting your child if they experience cyberbullying

eSafety research showed that more than 80% of teens took some form of action after a negative online experience, and this mostly involved self-help or speaking to family or friends.

If you are aware that your child has had a negative experience like cyberbullying, try to stay calm and remind them that support is available. eSafety can help you deal with the issue and report the abuse.

- We have general information about different types of cyberbullying and how the abuse may affect your child's behaviour.
- Our videos step you through collecting evidence.
- The eSafety Guide provides links to help you report a complaint to the social media site, app, game or websites where the cyberbullying occurred.
- We have FAQs about about how to report cyberbullying to eSafety and information on how we handle complaints.

Encouraging early help-seeking

Provide easy access to information about support services, such as displaying key contact numbers on your fridge.

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline provides free and confidential online and phone counselling to young people aged 5 to 25. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

kidshelpline.com.au or 1800 55 1800.

eHeadspace

eheadspace provides free online and telephone support and counselling to young people 12 to 25 and their families and friends. It is available 9am to 1am (Melbourne time), 7 days a week.

eheadpsace.org.au or 1800 650 890

Support for parents

Each state or territory has a dedicated parent helpline that offers counselling, information and a referral service. Opening hours vary by state.

Parentline (QLD and NT) — 1300 30 1300

Parentline (VIC) — 13 22 89

Parentline (NSW) — 1300 1300 52

Parent Helpline (SA) — 1300 364 100

Parentline (ACT) — 02 6287 3833

Parent Line (TAS) — 1300 808 178

Parenting WA Line (WA) — 08 6279 1200 or 1800 654 432

More resources

According to eSafety research, 40% of children and young people want to access online safety information through a trusted website.

eSafety Kids has information and advice designed especially for children aged 5 to 12. It provides simple explanations about issues that kids might need help with. The pages include tips for when someone is being mean online, what to do if you think you have been mean to others online and how to help friends.

eSafety Young People has information and advice designed especially for secondary students and younger adults. It explores common online safety risks as well as tips for preventing and dealing with them. The content includes a main page about cyberbullying and related pages about online drama, the difference between banter and bullying, what to do if you have been called a bully, being an upstander instead of a bystander, and other relevant issues.

The eSafety Parents pages have information and advice designed especially for parents and carers. A page on cyberbullying guides you through the signs to look out for and what to do if you think your child is being cyberbullied.

There are also tips if you are worried that your child might be bullying others or you need help with hard-to-have conversations about issues such as cyberbullying and online relationships.

eSafety also has information for people with diverse needs, including resources translated into languages other than English and Easy Read resources.

Keep up to date

Read the latest blogposts by the eSafety Commissioner.
Sign up to an eSafety newsletter tailored for parents and carers.

More resources: Other eSafety research

Digital lives of Aussie Teens (2021)

State of play – Youth, kids and digital dangers (2017)

Online safety for young people with intellectual disability (2020)

Adults' negative online experiences (2020)

Follow us on **Facebook, Instagram** and **Twitter**.

eSafety parents

esafety.gov.au