CYBERBULLYING

WHAT IS IT?

When someone is repeatedly mean, nasty, harassing or threatening to another on digital technology such as social media, mobile phones and online games.

It often occurs between people who know each other.

If someone is cyberbullied it often means they are also being bullied in person.

Cyberbullying can 'follow' the victim anywhere, making it difficult to get away from.

It can be more harmful as lots of people can see what is written or posted.

WHAT CAN IT LOOK LIKE?

Sending nasty texts, post, messages, pictures or videos

Logging in to someone's account and pretending to be them

Repeated prank phone calls

Intentionally excluding others from online forums or chats

Posting mean and nasty comments online

Sending or forwarding sexually explicit images

Creating a fake account to bully others

Forwarding peoples private messages, emails or pictures without consent

HOW WILL I KNOW?

There is no definitive list of signs, but here are some things to look for:

- Change in mood or behaviour (angry, upset or teary)
- Sudden change in friendship group (can be normal but should be explored)
- Suddenly wanting to be at home all the time with family instead of friends
- Sudden lowering of marks
- Not wanting to go places / changes in enthusiasm for sport or school
- Non specific illnesses (headaches, stomach aches, 'feeling sick')
- Distinct changes in online behaviour

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BUT AREN'T SOME OF THESE BEHAVIOURS NORMAL?

These behaviours may have different causes or be stages of your child's development, so it's important to keep an eye on behaviour patterns and explore them if something doesn't feel right.

Let your child know that nothing is so bad that they cannot tell you about it.
Talk early and talk often. Ask "Are you okay? Has something happened that is bothering you? Do you want to talk?"

If you're still concerned you can request some help from the wellbeing team, teacher, your doctor, a counsellor or psychologist.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING CYBERBULLIED?

Praise them for coming to you

Don't threaten to remove technology for what someone else has done

It's important not to respond to the bullying

Let the school know what is happening so they can help

Use parental controls to help manage content

If the bullying is ongoing, report it to the police.

Follow these steps:

1. Save and store the content for evidence

2. Use the 'Report Abuse' button on the social site

3. Help your child to block and delete the person from all contact lists

You can also report serious cyberbullying to the eSafety commissioner at www.esafety.gov.au

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS DOING THE BULLYING?

Parents / carers can help prevent online bullying by helping their child understand their behaviour is unacceptable and possibly criminal. Try and determine the cause of the behaviour.

- discuss why its not acceptable to be nasty on and offline

- Let them see there are consequences for poor behaviour on and offline

- Discuss how they can rectify the situation

- Work together to improve the situation by offering an apology to the victim and remove posts

- Encourage empathy by having them imagine how they would feel if they were the victim of bullying

- Take steps to ensure the behaviour doesn't continue

- If the behaviour continues seek support from school, doctor, counsellor or psychologist

*Information taken from Bullystoppers Cyberbullying Tipsheet. DET 2013