



Protect your kids against cyber bullying - 10 tips for parents on how to protect your children when they're online - from BullGuard

Cyber bullying is on the increase. What can you do as a parent to safeguard your children when they're online? Here are some simple tips to keep kids safe and give parents peace of mind.

Cyber bullying is such a nasty and insidious thing. Unlike other types of bullying the cyber bully is empowered by anonymity and can actually follow your child into the house and even taunt them in the privacy of their bedroom.

The victim often feels like they have nowhere to hide and the damage can be deeply scarring. It can undermine and destroy still developing and fragile self esteem. In extreme cases we've all heard stories of victims driven to extreme acts of self harm and unfortunately these accounts crop up with alarming regularity.

No one wants to think of their child being a victim of cyber bullying but according to research by BullGuard which surveyed parents, 58% said their children had been subjected to insults, taunts and threats when online.

Cyber bullies don't need to be bigger or more aggressive or even in the same place as the child they're bullying. But like all bullies they often rely on the passive support of other children who see what they are doing and don't challenge them. Children need to be aware that being cruel to other children is not acceptable and taking part in activity that can hurt other children is simply wrong.

Here's what one ear

ly teen said: "You can get bullied very easily on these sites especially if you don't have many friends or you don't look the way people want you to. It's horrible. It can hurt your feelings. It may be just a virtual site but you know there are people behind the computers. Don't make a comeback at them, you should just keep away and not respond."

Make sure your child doesn't become a victim of cyber bullying

There are some simple steps that you can take to protect your child from becoming a victim of cyber bullying:

1. Monitor your kids' technology use and keep the computer in a busy area of the house, where you can keep an eye on the monitor.
2. When children create accounts on different social media networks, help them to use privacy protection features. Encourage them to restrict the sensitive information they are exposing.
3. Understand how to use Facebook's privacy settings. This way you can determine who sees your children's posts, who can contact them and who can look them up. You can also manage what others can post on your children's timeline and restrict specific users. These settings change often, so be sure to stay to date with Facebook's privacy changes.
4. Make a point of knowing who your children communicate with online.
5. Insist on knowing your children's passwords and learn the common acronyms they use online and in text messages.

6. Advise your children not to respond to instant messages or emails with offensive or violent content. Encourage them to tell you or another adult if they receive threatening messages or are targeted by cyber bullies.
7. Teach your kids not to share sensitive photos of themselves. They can attract the wrong type of person.
8. Tell them that it's ok not to friend people they don't want to and not to communicate with people they don't know because people might not be who they claim to be.
9. If your children use smart phones to surf the web, guide them to be careful when installing apps. Some contain aggressive adware. Install games and other Android apps only from official market places.
10. Use an antivirus solution with parental control that watches over your kids online. Parental control blocks inappropriate web content, restricts Web access between certain hours, and helps parents remotely monitor their children's online activity.

Most parents are concerned about who their kids are talking to online, how much time they spend on the internet and the type of sites they are visiting. The tips above will help assuage anxieties and provide greater safety for children.

No parent wants to see their child being bullied and no child wants to be bullied. But it does happen and unfortunately it's becoming an increasingly common practice in the online world. Let's take steps to try and stamp it out.

Visit the [BullGuard website](#) to find out more about online identity security.