



# Bullying Hurts Online and off

## RESOURCES

Stop Cyberbullying

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>

Facts and Research on Cyberbullying

<http://www.cyberbullying.us/>

Public Anti-Cyberbullying Advertising Campaign  
at the National Crime Prevention Council

<http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>

## >INFOCUS

# Cyberbullying

*Protecting Your Child*

### The Threat

Our youth are more 'plugged in' than ever. Their online lives are as important to them as their real lives. Maligning someone online can seriously affect him or her. Posting fraudulent classified advertisements can bring serious jeopardy. Cyberbullies often don't even consider themselves bullies – they are just acting the way they wish they could in real life, seeing the Internet as their consequence-free playground. Nothing could be further from the truth.

### Consequences

Online Harassment is not harmless child's play. It hurts. It has even killed.

Megan Meier, not yet 14 years old, committed suicide over a boy that did not exist. She had befriended the boy, Josh, on MySpace and grew attached to him even though they never met or spoke on the telephone. When he insulted her she hung herself in her bedroom. It was discovered soon after that "Josh" was actually a fake profile created by the mother of Megan's former friend, the ex-friend herself and an 18-year-old girl. They had created the account only to harass Megan. And Megan is not alone.

# Cyberbullying

*It may seem like a safe, harmless way to strike at someone. After all, it's anonymous. It's not 'real life.' This is not true. Cyberbullying has real world consequences. If your kids are being cyberbullied they may feel trapped. They want their online lives to be private, secret and independent. This isolation creates an authority-free wilderness. Let your kids know they can turn to you. There are ways out. They do not have to go it alone.*

EXAMPLE COPY



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will stop. The victim should not let anyone see him or her upset. If the target carries on as if nothing has happened the bully will give up. A cyberbully will be embarrassed by their bullying behavior and will not continue it in person.

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*Ryan Patrick Halligan killed himself after a girl published their romantic online conversations. She did it for a laugh at his expense. He was only thirteen.*  
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**Report it:** A cyberbully may think that they are anonymous but they are dead wrong. Everything that happens online is tied to an "Internet Protocol" address. This means a cyberbully can be identified. If a child reports cyberbullying, contact the network administrator, website moderator or Internet service provider. They can track down the computer the person was using. You can stop the bully or at least narrow down whom it is.

Take every cyberbullying incident seriously. Don't feel powerless and do not take it any less seriously than in-person bullying – isolation is one of the cyberbully's greatest assets.

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*Rachel Neblett, 17 years old, took her life after receiving threatening emails detailing her movements.*  
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## The Cyberbully

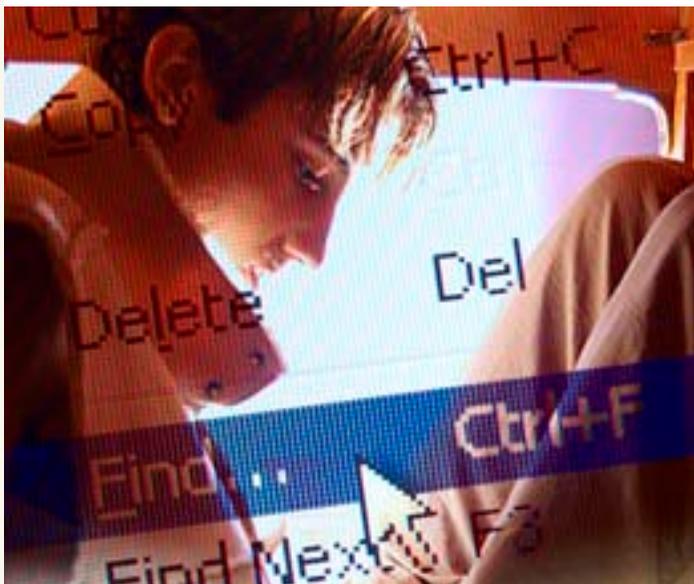
Cyberbullies are cowards. They don't have the courage to bully someone in person so they turn to the realm where they feel safe: the Internet.

The cyberbully's goal is intimidation. They want to frighten or stress out their target. They try to ostracize their targets, making them feel unwelcome – a typical 'mean girl' tactic transported to the digital realm. If their target thinks they cannot trust their friends they won't discover that the bullying was fictional to begin with. This is because they are afraid of, or intimidated by, their target – they want the target gone so that they are comfortable. They're cowards, remember?

## Handling the Bully

The best way of dealing with cyberbullying: **Ignore it and report it.**

**Ignore it:** A cyberbully wants a reaction. Don't let them have it. Unrewarded behavior



## Speak With Authority Figures

Cyberbullying is illegal in some areas and the list of cyberbullying laws is always growing. Report each occurrence to the police and school administrators. When cyberbullies are held accountable, cyberbullying will stop.

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*Choi Jin-sil, a South Korean movie starlet, hung herself within her apartment after she was repeatedly accused online of having caused the cyberbully suicide of another actor.*  
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## Types of Cyberbullying

**Cyberstalking** is using the Internet to track someone's movements or obtain personal information. Never post personal information in public places!

**Posting hurtful comments** on social website profiles.

**Sending anonymous messages** via email, instant messengers and cell phones are a favorite cyberbully tactic.

**Stealing passwords** and then changing them or using stolen profiles for damaging or illegal activities.

**Bashing sites** are websites produced specifically to insult people. They may vote on the ugliest kids at school or bash one person.

**Sending hundreds or thousands of text messages**, tying up the phone and potentially costing tons of money.

**Pretending to be someone the victim knows** or would want to know in order to obtain personal information. That information can be used against them or revealed to hurt their feelings.

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Cyberbullying is probably here to stay but that doesn't mean your kids have to be victims. Learn how to stop bullies: **Ignore them and report them.** Encourage kids to talk to you about their online lives. Tell them they can come to you and trust you. Give them their privacy – but be available if they need help.  
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