

**CYBER - BULLYING: TOOLKIT FOR
EDUCATORS TO IDENTIFY, MANAGE AND
PREVENT IT**

INTRODUCTION

Cyber-bullying can significantly impact children's mental health. The constant exposure to hurtful messages and negative comments can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression. Children may also experience a decline in self-esteem and confidence, affecting their overall well-being. It is crucial for parents and educators to address cyberbullying promptly to protect children's mental health.

Parents and educators play a vital role in creating a safe and inclusive environment for children to discuss their experiences with cyberbullying. By fostering open communication and providing resources for both victims and perpetrators, adults can help mitigate the negative effects of cyberbullying on children's mental health.

This toolkit enables parents and educators to identify bullying behaviours in children and take steps toward dealing with them.

DEFINITION

It is critical to understand the meaning of the phenomenon, in order to better handle it.

What is Cyber-bullying?

Cyber-bullying is when someone uses the internet, social media, or other digital platforms to harass, threaten, or embarrass someone else. It can happen on social media, in text messages, or even in online games.

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF CYBER-BULLYING IN CHILDREN?

It is important for school administrators or teachers in varying capacities to look out for the signs of bullying in children. The following points can guide you in identifying whether children are being cyber-bullied.

- **Changes in social circles:** You may hear of certain changes in behaviour from parents or may notice unexpected changes in friendship groups, avoidance of clubs, sports or activities, decline in grades and quality of their school work, loss of interest in the activities that they normally enjoy.
- **Changes in their wellbeing and mental health:** As an educator, you may notice they are being more withdrawn, anxious, sad, frustrated or angry or aren't eating as they usually do. These signs may indicate that the child is being bothered by something.
- **Changes in digital technology use:** Children may seem upset, nervous or worried about using devices in their computer class, or they may avoid talking about or showing their online activity to friends as they normally did, or they may completely stop using any devices.

These signs may be an indirect cry for help. Discuss the changes with parents or head teachers, and talk to the child if they trust you or encourage someone who they trust to talk to them to understand how they are feeling and why.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP CYBER-BULLYING?

School admins or teachers, tutors, both online and offline can encourage children to protect themselves in the following ways:

- **Implementing policies to punish cyber-bullies:** You can clearly state the punishments that any child would receive in case they are found to be guilty of cyber-bullying anyone in any form. You can create a zero-tolerance approach towards bullying behavior, so that students are aware of the seriousness of the situation and the repercussions they may face.
- **Regular monitoring of online activities:** and fostering a culture of respect and empathy further contribute to creating a positive and safe digital environment for all students.
- **Opening up a dialogue:** Encourage children to come and speak to you if they are facing bullying or if they feel angry or violent for any reason. A simple and free-flowing discussion can put multiple concerns to rest.

Educators can prevent cyber-bullying by educating students on responsible online behavior. It is crucial to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable reporting incidents. If cyber-bullying occurs, educators should address it promptly and involve parents and relevant authorities if necessary.

RESOURCES

You can use these resources to learn more about cyber-bullying and how to prevent it:

- [StopBullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov)
- [Cyberbullying Research Center](https://www.cyberbullyingresearchcenter.com)
- [Common Sense Media](https://www.common Sense Media.com)
- [Department for Education - South Australia](https://www.education.sa.gov.au)