

**CYBER - BULLYING: TOOLKIT FOR STUDENTS  
TO DEAL WITH IT**

# INTRODUCTION

A threatening message online or a joke or misuse of personal identity can hurt, and make you feel low, vulnerable, and anxious. Don't lose hope, because there is help that you can reach out to and experts who can guide you.

The **first step would be to talk to an adult you trust**, whether your parent, teacher, or sibling. It always helps to have someone you can confide in and with whom you can take necessary action.

## DEFINITION

It is critical to understand the meaning of the phenomenon, to tackle it better.

### 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.

According to the [National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal of India](#), a cyber-crime may be defined in general as "Any unlawful act where computer or communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime".

Cyber-bullying is a type of cyber-crime. A list of the crimes falling under cyber-crimes can be found on their website.

## AM I BEING CYBER-BULLIED?

You could experience cyber-bullying or a cyber-crime if it comprises any of the following:

- **Far more than a joke:** If someone posts a photo, comment, or meme about you that upsets or demeans you in any way and continues long after you have asked the perpetrator (if known to you) to stop, then it may constitute bullying.
- **Fake social media profiles:** If your social media profile has been hacked and someone is posting offensive or indecent content on it to defame you or has created a fake social media profile to impersonate you.
- **Cyber-stalking/cyber-grooming:** The use of technology or any form of electronic communication to stalk or groom a young person or child online with an intent to misuse, threaten, or invade their privacy and modesty constitute cyber-crimes.

This list does not include all types of cyber-crimes. If you face bullying or threats of any nature, you must talk to a trusted adult and report the incidents to relevant authorities. You can also call the National Police helpline number (112), the National Women helpline number (181), or the Cyber Crime Helpline (1930).

# WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE IF I AM CYBER-BULLIED?

Follow these steps in case you are being bullied online.

- **Talk to Someone you Trust:** It is okay to talk to someone you trust about what you are going through. It's okay to ask for help and support when dealing with cyber-bullying. It doesn't make you weak and only makes you human.
- **Save/screenshot all activities:** Though hurtful, do save or take screenshots of the messages, emails, posts, videos, and chats that contain offensive comments. These can be used as evidence later.
- **Block the Bully:** If the bully is sending you indecent or offensive messages, block their phone number or social media account and report them so they cannot send you any more messages.
- **File a Complaint:** If the bullying continues from other accounts, block those as well and take screenshots or save all messages, comments etc. If you feel the need, you can file a complaint with the Cyber-Crime helpline (1930) or register a complaint on the [National Cyber crime Reporting Portal](#) in India for cyber-crimes against children or women or other cyber-crimes, or you can register a complaint at the nearest police station from where it will be transferred to the cyber cell.
- **Try Counseling:** Cyber-bullying in any form can be traumatizing. There is no harm in approaching your school counselor if you feel comfortable talking to them or asking them to refer another therapist who can counsel, guide you, and talk through your fears. Keeping all your emotions inside you can often do more harm than good.

It may also be uncomfortable to talk to your parents at first because of the fear of being reprimanded or judged but once you've spoken to a counselor or another trusted adult, you may feel a little less scared of opening up to your parents. While they may not have all the answers immediately, they will do everything they can to support you and figure things out.

## HELPLINES FOR CYBER-CRIMES & CYBER-BULLYING IN INDIA

The list below has been curated after a preliminary online search. Due diligence is advised before contacting them.

Helpline Number	155260 (9 am to 6 pm)
Female student/child helpline	1098
Child Line- is a 24-hour, FREE, nation-wide phone outreach emergency helpline for children in need of care and protection.	3317004
Police Control Room	100
Delhi Police Helpline	1091
National Police helpline number	112
Cyber-Crime helpline	1930
National Women helpline number	181

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF IN THE FUTURE?

It is normal if you do not want to continue to have an online presence for some time after the incident. When you do want to return to social media, consider the following guidance:

- **Never share your location:** While taking photos from your phone camera, ensure that the location is turned off. Refrain from talking to strangers online and offline and telling them where you live or places that you frequent.
- **Switch your profiles from public to private:** Make your social media profiles private and think before posting anything online. Not every detail needs to be shared, nor does every life update.
- **Be wary of 'well-wishers':** You may get a lot of unsolicited messages on social media asking how you are or commenting on your display pictures. If you don't know them, stay away. Block and report them as not everyone is who they seem.
- **Review and Remove 'Friends':** Review your 'friends' and 'followers' on social media sites and ensure only people you know can see your profile. Remove suspicious 'friends' or 'followers', who don't have a single post on their profile or who may be impersonating someone else. If you choose to retain 'followers' you don't personally know, make sure you are cautious of what you share with them.

Though there is no guarantee of protection, it is important to exercise as much caution as you can. Stay safe and vigilant.

## REFERENCES

- [BBC Bitesize: How to deal with cyber-bullying](#)
- [Wikihow: Deal with Cyber-Bullying as a Child or Teen](#)
- [National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal](#)