

What is Cyber Bullying?

With advances in technology come advances in the way kids can pick on each other. It used to be that bullying was relegated to the school yard, but today kids can use the internet and cell phones to bully each other in a way that has been termed cyber bullying. This new type of bullying can be just as harmful as traditional bullying and even have criminal ramifications.

Cyber bullying is when a child or teenager is harassed, threatened, humiliated, or otherwise targeted for abuse using the internet, cell phone, or other digital communication device. Cyber bullying only refers to children harassing other children, if adults are involved in the harassment than it is not called cyber bullying. Cyber bullying should be taken seriously because it can be so damaging and even be illegal.

Cyber bullying may entail posting mean, lewd, or derogatory statements about a person online, sending embarrassing photos of a person through email or text message, or any other mean spirited act committed against another child using that type of technology. Because the possibilities of cyber bullying are endless, cases of cyber bullying can become very serious, even to the point of injury or death. There have been reported cases of suicide and homicide related to cyber bullying as well as physical and emotional damage. Never assume that cyber bullying will stop on its own, all the attention cyber bullying can draw is a great motivator for cyber bullies to continue.

Cyber bullying often occurs repeatedly and is usually not a one time occurrence. Cyber bullying victims are often targeted and tormented relentlessly and the ease of which information is shared on the internet and through cell phones makes committing acts of cyber bullying easy. Kids can find many different ways to embarrass, threaten, or belittle others using the internet or a cell phone. Depending on the severity of the offense, cyber bullying can be charged as a crime. If information or passwords were stolen or threats were made, children can be charged as delinquents for under the law.

Do not be afraid to peruse your child's rights in the case of cyber bullying, sometimes it is the only way to make it stop and send the message to other children that cyber bullying is no acceptable.

Although schools try to do everything they can to stop and prevent bullying, cyber bullying can be a tough from of bullying for a school to control. Cyber bullying that occurs off of school property is usually considered out of the authority of the school and little can be done by administrators to stop it. Parents play a key role in preventing cyber bullying and closely monitoring

children's online and cell phone activity is the best way to do so. If you notice that your child is having unexpected problems, don't assume they are a normal part of growing up. If your child becomes hesitant to use the computer they may be experiencing cyber bullying and you should investigate to make sure they are not harmed.