

# MONTHLY INFORMATION - THIS MONTH

## CYBERBULLYING

### Cyberbullying : What is it and how to get help

#### What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, chat room, discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as SMS.

Examples of cyberbullying behaviour are:

- teasing and being made fun of
  - spreading of rumours online
  - sending unwanted messages
- defamation.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community. It's really important to learn how to protect yourself online and to learn how to respond if you or a friend is being cyberbullied. Read on for more info.

#### How common is cyberbullying?

The number of reports of cyberbullying to the NetAlert Helpline has been increasing, particularly since 2006.

An online safety survey conducted by NetAlert and ninemsn in February 2007 found that:

- 16 per cent of young people said they had been bullied online, while 14% were bullied through their mobile, with boys and girls experiencing similar levels.
- 56 per cent thought it was easy to get bullied online.

***Under certain circumstances (such as harassment and making threats) cyberbullying is a criminal activity and is illegal.*** If you feel your safety is at risk, contact '000' or your local police. Police around Australia work together to reduce this type of crime and there are serious consequences if people participate in such activities.

#### How you might be feeling if you are being cyberbullied

Just like bullying in real life, there can be terrible effects on those who experience cyberbullying.

Being bullied can lower your self-esteem and you may feel alone, sad, angry and scared. If you are being bullied it is not your fault and there is nothing wrong with you. Don't be afraid to let someone know that you are being bullied as they may be able to help you.

Check out the fact sheet on [Bullying - what to do](http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/bullying-what-it-is) <http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/bullying-what-it-is> if you are being bullied for more info.

#### How to stop cyberbullies

If you are being cyberbullied it is possible that you're feeling powerless and isolated.

But, there are options and you can do things to stop the problem.

- **Keep a record** (including time and date) - This may help you (or the police) to find out who is sending the messages.
- **Tell someone** - Talk to someone you trust, a parent, friend, school counsellor or teacher.
- **Contact your phone or internet service provider and report what is happening** - They can help you block messages or calls from certain senders.
- **If messages are threatening or serious get in touch with the police** - Cyberbullying, if it's threatening, is illegal. You don't need to put up with that!
- **Don't reply to bullying messages** - It'll only get worse if you do. By replying the bully gets what he or she wants. Often if you don't reply the bully will leave you alone.
- **Change your contact details** - Get a new user name for the internet, a new e-mail account, a new mobile phone number and only give them out to your closest friends.
- **Keep your username and passwords secret - Keep your personal information private so it doesn't fall into the hands of someone who'll misuse it**