

# Coping *with*

## CYBER BULLYING

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Bullying can occur in school, outside of school, at clubs, and even if you have a part-time job. The bullying that is often most recognisable occurs in person. It may include being called names, being threatened, or even physically attacked. A more recent form of bullying, cyber-bullying, is any form of bullying that occurs via text, instant message, email or on social media.



Bullying can occur seemingly randomly, or it might be aimed at people because of their gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. It is important to remember that if you are being bullied, regardless of the reason, the bully's actions are never acceptable.

In this article, we will look in more detail at bullying, and explore what you can do if you, or a friend, experience it.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to hurt someone else. This can take the form of physical assaults, or verbal insults that cause emotional pain. Verbal bullying might include name-calling, making personal insults, persistent teasing or being threatened. The things a bully says might make you believe that you can't defend yourself or stop the bullying from happening.

A survey by Trinity College Dublin found that 16% of secondary students had been bullied at some time. Of the students who were bullied, almost half said they were bullied in the classroom. Bullying also occurred in the corridors, playground, toilets and changing rooms.

## What is Cyber-Bullying?

Cyber-bullying is a relatively new form of bullying. It takes place over digital devices include phones, tablets and computers. It could include sending hurtful messages, posting negative, harmful, or false information on social media, or sharing private information or photos with the aim of humiliating or embarrassing someone else.

Cyber-bullying can occur in the following ways:

- Via text message, Whatsapp or any other instant or direct messaging app
- On social media including Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok and Facebook
- In chat rooms, online forums, or message boards
- By email
- On any other site that allows for conversation between users.

Cyber-bullying can be particularly upsetting because, unlike other forms of bullying, it is not confined to the school day. In fact, cyber-bullying can sadly occur 24/7. This form of bullying may also be more likely to occur without your teachers noticing.



## How Do I Recognise Bullying?

Sometimes, it's not easy to tell if you are being bullied. Bullying, or cyber-bullying, may start slowly before progressing into more unpleasant or aggressive behaviour.

### Physical Bullying

It is never ok to hurt someone else. Any type of physical violence or aggression could be a sign of bullying, including hitting, punching, kicking, biting, or being restrained against your will. You may also feel intimidated by someone who bullies you by invading your personal space, or blocks your entry or exit into a room such as a classroom, canteen or changing room.

### Emotional Bullying

It can be difficult to know when banter crosses the line into bullying or abuse. If you feel emotionally hurt by what someone else says, or if words are said to threaten, belittle or mock you, then this should not be brushed off as banter.

Banter should be funny for all involved, and not leave the same person feeling victimised every time. For banter to occur within the context of a healthy friendship, you should feel that you and your friends also support and are kind to each other, and share plenty of fun times, too. If you tell someone that their so-called 'banter' upsets you, a

true friend will not want to hurt you further and will therefore adjust the way they treat you. However, a bully may tell you that you are over-reacting, making it up, or being pathetic.

If someone regularly shouts, screams or yells at you, then this is likely a sign of bullying. However, offensive words spoken quietly can be just as aggressive or offensive. Being criticised for your size, race, LGBTQ+ status, disability or accent can make you feel isolated and ashamed. Bullies who choose a victim who is part of a minority group do so because it gives them a feeling of power.

If their words or actions play on your mind or make you feel unhappy, this is not a healthy friendship. If someone else's behaviour is hurting you, and you don't feel like you can stop them, you may be experiencing emotional bullying.

## Cyber-Bullying

Banter can also occur on social media or in messages. However, if the actions of others online make you feel that you are being joked about, teased, embarrassed, humiliated, ridiculed or left out, then you should consider if this might be cyber-bullying. Social media should be a place to have fun and socialise online, not a platform where others can make you feel bad about yourself.

### What Can I Do to Deal with Bullying?

If you feel able to, stand up to the bully. Tell them that they are bullying you and that they should stop. However, you should not be hard on yourself if this feels too difficult.

If confronting the bully is not right for you, speak to a parent, teacher, or another trusted adult for advice and support. It can be scary to speak up, as you may worry that the bully's behaviour will worsen if you report them. However, this is the first step in stopping them from mistreating you (and likely other people, too).

If you decide to confide in a teacher, ask to set up a meeting so that you can speak when no-one else is present. Take a friend or parent with you, if you feel that would help. Your teacher should take your concerns seriously and then follow the school's anti-bullying policy. If you don't feel that the bullying is being taken seriously, keep a diary of what is happening and show another adult so that they can see the evidence.

*Stop  
bullying*



Some types of bullying should be reported to An Garda Síochána. Physical or sexual assaults, being threatened with a weapon such as a knife, incidences of theft, or being bullied because of your sexual orientation, disability or race can all be formally reported.

If hurtful information is shared about you online, it is wise to screengrab the posts as evidence. Cyber-bullying is often less visible to adults, but by keeping a record, you can show your parents or teachers how the bully treats you online.

It is important to be aware that if someone shares naked photos of you, this is illegal and should be reported to An Garda Síochána. Once you have gathered screengrab evidence, you may feel better if you block or delete that person.

## I have a friend who is being bullied. What can I do to help them?

It can be hard to see a friend being bullied. However, a bully can have far less impact on someone who is supported by a friend or two.

You could help your friend in one or more of the following ways.

- Ask if your friend thinks they are being bullied. Sometimes it is not obvious to the person who is being targeted.
- Reassure them that the bullying is not their fault.
- Tell them that you value them as a friend, and that you will support them.
- Find others who will also be supportive – this could be other students in your class.
- Encourage your friend to keep a diary of what has been happening.
- Arrange it so that you can be with them in situations where the bullying tends to occur (for example, walking with them between classes).
- Ignore the bully, and try not to respond to any of their taunts.



- If you see the bullying happening, get your friend to leave the situation with you. Leaving is often a good way to diffuse a bully's behaviour.
- Screengrab any negative posts as evidence. Never share negative posts yourself, as this will not only be hurtful to your friend, but could be seen as an endorsement of the bully's behaviour.

## I think my child is being bullied, what are the signs?

A child who is being bullied may hide this fact from their parents. They may feel embarrassed, ashamed, or worried that if their parent speaks to the school, it will only make things worse.

However, despite a child keeping quiet, certain signs may lead some parents to question whether their child is being bullied. Bullying can increase the presence of the following emotional, behavioural and physical signs.



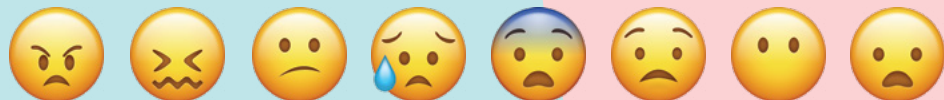
## Emotional or Behavioural Signs

- Mood swings that seem to occur without reason
- Being tearful
- Anger or aggression
- Change to eating (eating more or less than usual)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Becoming withdrawn
- Weight loss or gain
- Losing money, or stealing
- New, negative behaviour towards siblings
- Refusing to go to School
- Frightened to walk to school
- No longer wants to go to clubs or activities
- Worsened academic performance
- Talks of being alone or isolated at school.

## Physical Signs of Bullying

- Bruises, scratches or cuts that your child can't explain
- Damage to belongings
- Loss of possessions or clothing
- Returning from school more hungry than usual.

If you are worried about any of these signs, speak to your child. If you are still concerned, arrange an appointment with the school or any clubs that you may be concerned about to see if they share your concerns.



## What should I do if my child is being bullied?

Protecting your child is your priority. Where possible, listen to your child so that you fully understand the events that have occurred. Remind your child that bullying is unacceptable, and that it is not their fault. It is normal for children to feel sad, scared, angry or alone, and it will help if you can validate these feelings.

If the bullying has occurred at school, or involves students from the same school, request a meeting with your child's teacher, head of year, or a member of the senior management team. Your child's school should have a policy for dealing with bullying. Ask what will be done to ensure your child's safety, and arrange a follow-up appointment to assess progress.

If bullying has occurred elsewhere, such as a sports' club, raise your concerns with the club directly. You should also inform your child's school so that they are aware that changes in behaviour may be related to bullying occurring outside of school.

One of the most effective ways to maintain a friendship or relationship, or to help someone when they are feeling low, is to actively listen. Active listening involves listening without distractions and giving someone your full attention. Anyone can be an active listener as no special training is required and learning this skill could make a big difference to someone's mental health.





# Help and Assistance

If you are concerned about yourself, friends or family you should contact your GP or Out of Hours Service immediately.

You can also get immediate support and information 24/7 by

## FreeText HELP to 50015

Texting 50015 is free of charge from any network and you can text this number even if you have no credit. This service is fully confidential and YSPI has no information on mobile numbers that use the FreeText service



For information on:

- Emergency Contacts
- National Helplines
- Local Support Groups
- Directions to your nearest GP or out of hours clinic
- Directions to your nearest safe place or refuge

 [www.ineedhelp.ie](http://www.ineedhelp.ie)

**Always call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured, and their life is at risk.**

**Gardaí / Ambulance / Fire call 999 or 112**

# About Youth Suicide Prevention Ireland

Youth Suicide Prevention Ireland was founded in 2007 as there were no national charities focusing specifically on the problems and issues of youth suicide and self-harm in Ireland. We now provide a range of services aimed at mental health awareness and suicide prevention amongst teenagers.



We run our “Four Steps to Help” Programme for schools and colleges around Ireland which provides Zoom workshops. We also have a video workshop presented by John Sharpson that any organisation can book through our website at [schools.yspi.ie/video.php](http://schools.yspi.ie/video.php) We provide a wide range of free information including our “Let’s Talk About Mental Health” magazine delivered to schools and organisations as well as the “Coping With” series of mental health guides.

We also operate a **24/7 FreeText Crisis Information Service** and fund a Youth Crisis Counselling Service.

Full details are available at [www.yspi.ie](http://www.yspi.ie)

You can help us save more young lives by donating to our work or by joining a fundraising event.



To make a donation please visit

[donations.yspi.ie](http://donations.yspi.ie)



or to try a Skydive For Life by visiting

[skydive.yspi.ie](http://skydive.yspi.ie)



A Guide to understanding and coping with common mental health issues.

Issues covered in this guide include:

- Warning Signs of a Mental Health Crisis
- Coping With Anxiety
- Coping With Depression
- Coping With Stress
- Coping With Bullying & Cyber-bullying
- Active Listening and how it can help

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# Coping *with* CYBER BULLYING



**COPING WITH DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS**  
Short guides to coping with common mental health issues