

QUICK GUIDE TO CYBERBULLYING



What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens through digital devices like phones, tablets, or computers. It usually involves repeated, aggressive behavior and a power imbalance, often among peers. While not every rude message counts, true cyberbullying includes ongoing harassment, threats, or humiliation—especially in school-related social circles.

How Common Is It?

In North Macedonia, a growing number of young people are exposed to online violence, including cyberbullying. Although exact figures vary, research from initiatives like MkSafeNet and reports from schools and NGOs show that many teens have experienced at least one harmful online incident.

Despite this, it's important to note that most young people are not involved in bullying. On the contrary, many actively support a culture of empathy, respect, and responsibility in the digital world.

Recognizing the Signs

Cyberbullying doesn't always come with visible signs, but there are changes in behavior you can watch for. These may include difficulty sleeping, sudden shifts in online habits (like constantly checking social media), falling grades, reluctance to go to school, expressions of helplessness, or lower self-esteem. In cases where physical bullying is also involved, you might notice damaged or missing belongings or unexplained injuries.

What to Do If Your Child Is Cyberbullied

If your child faces cyberbullying, stay calm and offer support. Create space for honest conversation—talk about what happened, how they feel, and what they can do next. Advise them not to react or fight back. Instead, help them block the offender and save any evidence. Include your child in deciding how to respond. Supporting—not controlling—them helps build confidence.

What Should I Do If My Child Is Cyberbullying Others?

Begin with a conversation: listen carefully, gather the facts, and avoid jumping to conclusions. If needed, respectfully check their devices or online activity to understand the full context. Try to identify any underlying emotional or social challenges that may be influencing their behavior. Remember, even if your child has participated in bullying, that doesn't define who they are. Labels like "bully" can be harmful. Instead, focus on education, open communication, and support—these are the most effective tools for helping your child grow and make better choices.

More Advice about Cyberbullying

When Your Child Asks for Help – Listen First

If your child opens up about being bullied or targeted by hate speech, that's already a positive step. Many children choose not to tell their parents, so when they do, it's important to respond with empathy. Start by listening—understand not only what happened, but also how it made your child feel.

Stay calm. Avoid overreacting or immediately confronting others. Instead, focus on gathering the facts and showing your child that you're there to support, not judge.

Involve Your Child in the Process

Bullying and cyberbullying often make children feel powerless or humiliated. By involving your child in the process of finding solutions, you help them regain a sense of control and personal agency.

Respond Thoughtfully, Not Impulsively

In North Macedonia, as elsewhere, acting rashly—such as calling the school immediately or confronting other parents—can sometimes worsen the situation. If other students find out about adult intervention, your child may face further exclusion or ridicule. That's why any response should be carefully considered and, whenever possible, coordinated with your child.

The Goal Is to Restore Self-Respect

More than punishing the person responsible, the priority should be helping your child regain their dignity and confidence. Sometimes this means standing up to the bully; other times, it means walking away with strength. Together, you can decide on the best path forward.

The Power of Resilience

While we must continue working to eliminate bullying, we also need to recognize the long-term value of resilience. Life will always include challenges, and learning to cope with them helps children grow stronger. Resilience isn't taught in theory—it's built through real-life experience.

So, give your child space to grow, but remind them they are never alone. Your presence and support are the foundation of their recovery and strength.



**"Each click matters
– spread kindness,
not harm."**



**For more
information on
cyberbullying and
online safety, visit:
www.mksafenet.mk**



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