Cyber Bullying Notes

What Is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. By definition, it occurs among young people. When an adult is involved, it may meet the definition of **cyber-harassment** or **cyberstalking**, a crime that can have legal consequences and involve jail time.

Because many kids are reluctant to report being bullied, it's impossible to know just how many are affected.

### Effects of Cyberbullying

No longer limited to schoolyards or street corners, modern-day bullying can happen at home as well as at school — essentially 24 hours a day. Picked-on kids can feel like they're getting blasted nonstop and that there is no escape. As long as kids have access to a phone, computer, or other device (including tablets), they are at risk.

Severe, long-term, or frequent cyberbullying can leave both victims and bullies at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders. In some rare but highly publicized cases, some kids have turned to suicide. Experts say that kids who are bullied — and the bullies themselves — are at a higher risk for suicidal thoughts, attempts, and completed suicides.

The punishment for cyberbullies can include being suspended from school or kicked off of sports teams. Certain types of cyberbullying can be considered crimes.

Signs of Cyberbullying

Many kids and teens who are cyberbullied don't want to tell a teacher or parent, often because they feel ashamed of the social stigma or fear that their computer privileges will be taken away at home.

Signs of cyberbullying vary, but may include:

* being emotionally upset during or after using the Internet or the phone
* being very secretive or protective of one's digital life
* withdrawal from family members, friends, and activities
* avoiding school or group gatherings
* slipping grades and "acting out" in anger at home
* changes in mood, behaviour, sleep, or appetite
* wanting to stop using the computer or mobile phone
* being nervous or jumpy when getting an instant message, text, or email
* avoiding discussions about computer or mobile phone activities

What can you do if you or someone you know is being cyber bullied?

* Don’t join in – don’t comment on posts, images or videos.
* Don’t forward or share the images or videos.
* Leave negative groups.
* Call people on their cyber bullying behaviour.
* Support your friend online and offline.
* Report it! To parents or someone at the school.