CONNECTION
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ANTI-BULLYING & ONLINE SAFETY PROGRAMME
for students in Primary School

**A PARENT'S GUIDE ON HOW
TO DEAL WITH CYBERBULLYING**

A Parents' Guide on how to deal with Cyberbullying

In order for a parent to deal with cyberbullying, there are some specific yet clear and distinct steps that should be taken under consideration.

1. What is Cyberbullying?

Parents should be aware of what cyberbullying is and how it looks like.

Cyberbullying:

- is an aggressive act or behaviour;
- is carried out using electronic means;
- is carried out by a group or an individual;
- is either repeated over time or a once-of incident;
- goes against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself

The main difference between bullying and cyberbullying is that the latter happens online

2. What are the types of Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying can happen in several ways:

- Mean text messages
- Writing harsh e-mails
- Starting or spreading rumours about someone online
- Posting or sharing embarrassing pictures or videos of someone without their permission
- Setting up fake profiles and posing as someone else
- Creating cruel websites as an attack on someone

3. How do I recognise Cyberbullying? – Signs of Cyberbullying

When your child(ren) does not tell you that they are cyberbullied, there are some signs (some similar to bullying) that can reveal the incident:

- emotionally upset during or after using the Internet or the phone
- more time spent alone (e.g. in their room)
- no interest in family/friend activities
- avoidance of school
- withdrawn from social interaction with peers
- decreased school performance

- anger
- changes in mood
- sleep and eating disorders
- reluctant to be online and to chat with friends online
- sudden decision to stop using electronic means
- nervousness when receiving a text
- avoiding discussions about online activities

4. What will happen to my child if he/she is Cyberbullied? – Impact of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can cause to kids the following (apart from others):

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Panic attacks
- Self-Harming
- Post-traumatic stress
- Attempted suicide, suicide

5. What should I do as parent?

First you should understand if this is cyberbullying (see sections above). Once you make sure that this is about a behaviour of cyberbullying, follow the steps below:

- Try to comfort your child(ren) by discussing similar experiences.
- Support your child(ren) and explain that it is not their fault that they were cyberbullied. They have someone by their side and you will help him/her to overcome it.
- Advise child(ren) not to reply. They should not show that they are upset as it may worsen things.
- Advise your child(ren) to keep the message/post etc. (screenshot it) as it can be used as proof if there is any further need.
- Tell your child(ren) to block the person/people who send these messages (see relevant resources on how to block a person, contact etc. on social media).
- Tell your child(ren) always to report posts or people that make them feel upset (see relevant resources on how to report people, posts, etc. on social media).
- **Refer to the school anti-bullying policy. It will allow you to get information about how an incident or report you make to the school is handled.**
- Inform your child(ren)'s school. Let first your child(ren) know about your intentions to ask support from the school and report the incident to the appropriate person at school.
- Report the incident to the Gardai. If you have no control of your child(ren)'s cyberbullying, make a formal report to the Gardai.