



Office of New Mexico **Attorney General**



*Attorney General*

**HECTOR BALDERAS**

# Cyber Bullying and Cyber Safety

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~STOP GRANT TRAINER AND PRESENTER  
ADVOCACY AND INTERVENTION DIVISION

Thank you for the invitation to provide services to your  
school community.

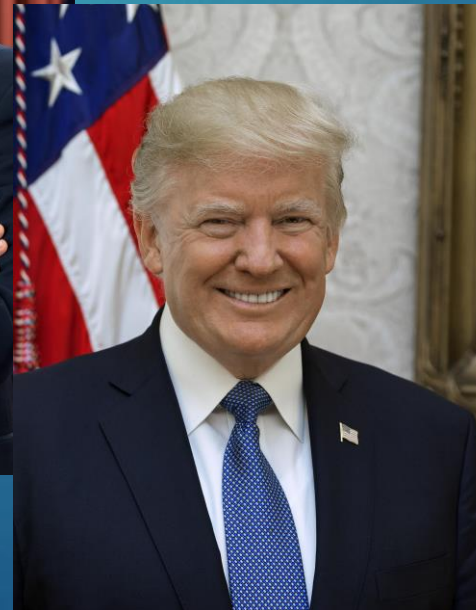
The office of the New Mexico  
Attorney General.

# NMOAG-Hector Balderas

## Protecting our children is a priority

▶ <https://youtu.be/bXHf8uYzclU>

# What do they all have in common?



# GAME TIME: What is Cyber Bullying?

A, B, C or D?

A. Sending insults or threats via text messaging or social media.

B. Spreading rumors for the purpose of damaging a person's reputation.

C. Pretending to be someone you are not online.

D. Posting a picture of your new car and bragging about it.

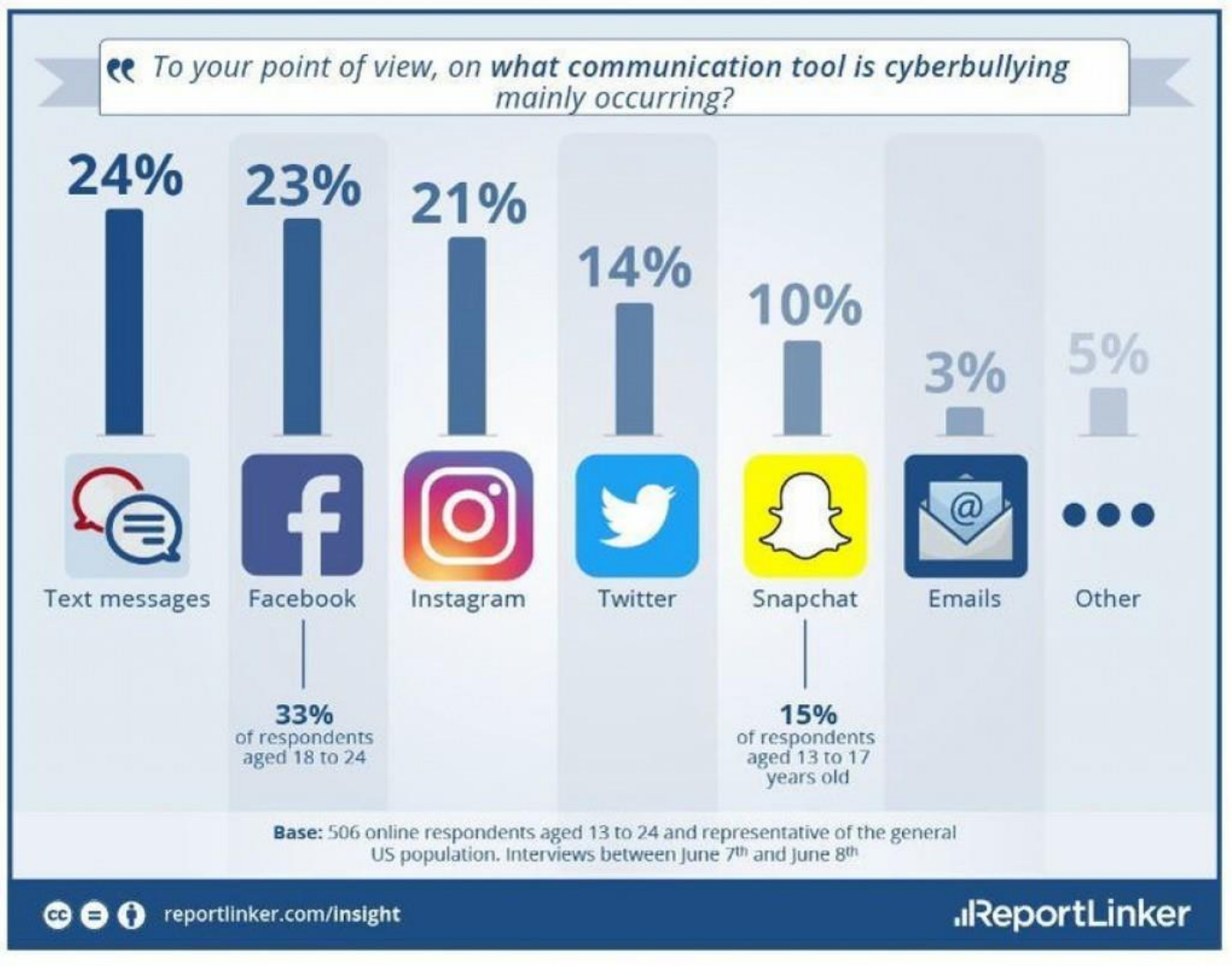
# What is Cyber Bullying?

## Defined as:

- ▶ *“willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.”*
- ▶ referring to incidents where adolescents use technology to harass, threaten, humiliate, or otherwise hassle their peers or others.



# Cyber Bullying Statistics from 2019



# Where does cyberbullying commonly occur?

## **Online:**

Cyberbullying occurs across a variety of venues and mediums in cyberspace,

- ▶ In the early 2000s, many kids hung out in chat rooms, and as a result that is where most harassment took place.

## **Social media:**

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok/Musical.ly, Twitter,

## **Online Gaming with voice/text chat:**

Roblox, League of Legends, Over watch, Player Unknown, Battlegrounds, Fortnite and videosharing

## **Streaming sites:**

YouTube, SnapChat, Facebook live, Twitch, and Live.Me.

# DING, DING, DING.....

<https://youtu.be/iaA-BgpFNCQ>



# Negative effects that cyberbullying can have on a person:

## Those who are targeted:

- ▶ Victims report feelings of Depression, sadness, anger, and frustration.
- ▶ Some felt hurt both physically and mentally.
- ▶ Feeling scared me and effected my confidence.
- ▶ Feeling sick and worthless to others.
- ▶ Afraid or embarrassed to go to school (leading to excessive absences).

# Consequences of Cyberbullying

## Not a Rite of Passage

In most states, bullying and cyberbullying are against school policy and state law.



### At school:

- ☹️ Not allowed to participate in certain school activities
- ☹️ Suspension

### Legally you may face charges:

- ☹️ You could be criminally charged with harassment or stalking

### Long-term implications:

- ☹️ It could limit your ability to receive certain scholarships or secure certain jobs

# Charges Brought against a couple involved in Cyber bullying

▶ <https://youtu.be/-5zvlyIEEwg>

# What Would You Do?

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5b1XZAKTlk&feature=youtu.be>

# Sexting

\*“Sexting” refers to youth sending sexually explicit messages or sexually explicit photos of themselves or others to their peers. Today, many teens are using cell phones, computers, web cams, digital cameras, and/or certain video game systems to take and distribute sexually explicit photographs of themselves or others.

\*NCMEC Net Smartz <http://www.netsmartz411.org/NetSmartz411/KnowledgeDetail.aspx?id=401119>

# Grooming, what can happen?



# Grooming:

Definition: the action by a pedophile of preparing a child for a meeting, especially via an Internet chat room, with the intention of committing a sexual offense.

- ▶ Anyone can be a victim. Vulnerability is a common factor.
- ▶ Often starts with a friendship.
- ▶ Favors and promises are made to build trust.
- ▶ Secrecy.
- ▶ Difficult to distinguish from romance.

# Social Media and Future Impacts:



- ▶ Once something is sent out through internet it can not be completely deleted or vanish.
- ▶ Think of your current Social Media you have....
- ▶ What personal information is on it and who has access to it?
- ▶ Future employers use this as a reference and as your online resume



# The TMI Epidemic

[https://youtu.be/5P\\_0s1TYpJU](https://youtu.be/5P_0s1TYpJU)

# No Taking It Back!

- 🍏 Embarrassment
- 🍏 Humiliation
- 🍏 Loss of Relationships
- 🍏 Bullying
- 🍏 Objectification
- 🍏 Depression



# Don't Trip Over Your Digital Footprint

Every  and  leaves a digital footprint.

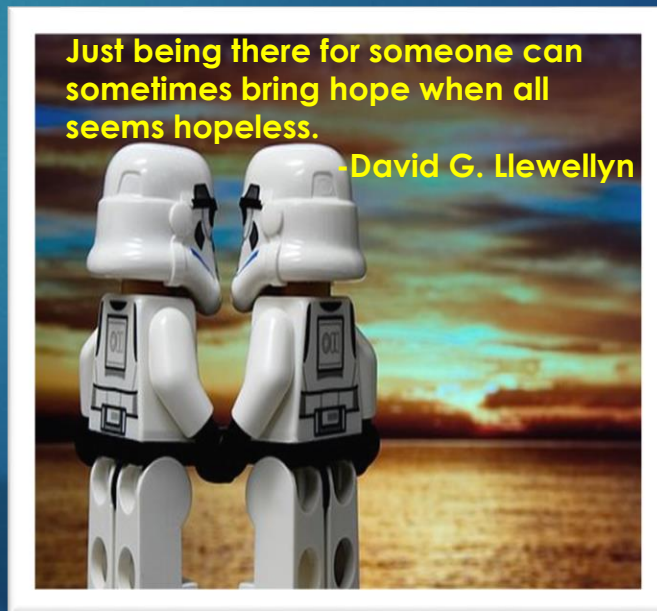


A status update of 140 characters is all it takes to seriously offend others or damage your reputation.



# See Something, Say Something~ Don't Stand By

“Never believe a few caring people can't change the World, for indeed those are who ever have”  
~Margaret Mead



# Internet Safety: What Parents Need to Know

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## National Online Safety 7 questions to help you start a conversation with your child about online safety

Which apps/games are you using at the moment? **#WakeUpWednesday**  
Publish date: 07/11/18

1 THIS WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF THINGS YOUR CHILDREN ARE DOING ON THEIR DEVICES, ALONG WITH THEIR INTERESTS. REMEMBER THAT THEY MIGHT NOT TELL YOU EVERYTHING THEY ARE USING, SO IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO ASK THEM TO SHOW YOU THEIR DEVICE, BECAUSE NEW APPS AND GAMES ARE RELEASED REGULARLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION OFTEN TO ENSURE YOU ARE UP TO DATE WITH WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

2 Which websites do you enjoy using and why?  
AS IN THE TIP ABOVE, ASKING THIS QUESTION WILL ALLOW YOU TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING ONLINE, AND ENCOURAGE POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITY. ASK THEM HOW THEY USE THE WEBSITES, AND TAKE AN INTEREST IN HOW THEY CAN USE THEM IN A POSITIVE WAY, ALSO ASKING THEM TO SHOW YOU IF POSSIBLE.

3 How does this game/app work? Can I play?  
SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING, WHILE YOU ARE PLAYING A GAME OR USING AN APP WITH THEM, IT MIGHT HIGHLIGHT SOMETHING THAT THEY DON'T NECESSARILY THINK IS A DANGER TO THEM. IF THEY ACT LIKE THEY DON'T WANT TO SHARE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH YOU, QUESTION WHY.

4 Do you have any online friends?  
CHILDREN CAN FORM POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE ONLINE, AND THIS HAS BECOME MORE COMMON THAN IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, THEY MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FRIEND AND A STRANGER, YOU COULD MAKE THE QUESTION MORE SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILD, FOR EXAMPLE, 'HAVE YOU MET ANYONE ONLINE THAT YOU LIKE TO PLAY GAMES WITH?' THEY MAY NOT WANT TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOU, SO ENSURE YOU TEACH THEM ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

5 Do you know where to go for help?  
ALTHOUGH YOU MAY BE THE ADULT THEY TRUST THE MOST, SOME CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ONLINE DUE TO CONFUSION OR EMBARRASSMENT, BECAUSE OF THIS THEY MAY STRUGGLE TO APPROACH THE NORMAL PEOPLE WHO WOULD HELP, SUCH AS YOURSELF OR A TEACHER, HAVE A CHAT TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE THEY CAN GO FOR HELP, AND HOW THEY CAN REPORT ANY ACTIVITY THAT THEY BELIEVE IS INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE.

6 Do you know what your personal information is?  
YOUR CHILD MAY ALREADY KNOW WHAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS BUT THEY MIGHT NOT THINK ABOUT HOW IT CAN BE SHARED, HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION IS AND HOW THIS CAN AFFECT THEM IF IT IS SHARED BEYOND THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THE DANGERS OF SHARING CONTACT DETAILS OR PHOTOS, AS INFORMATION SUCH AS THIS CAN SPREAD QUICKLY ONLINE.

7 Do you know your limits?  
CHILDREN MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEVICE OR GAME ADDICTION, TALK TO THEM OPENLY ABOUT HEALTHY HABITS AND ASK WHETHER OR NOT THEM SPENDING TIME ONLINE OR PLAYING A GAME IS AFFECTING THEIR SLEEP, PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL, OR IF THEY ARE GENERALLY LOSING INTEREST IN OTHER ACTIVITIES, YOU MAY LEAD ON TO ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSING THE INTRODUCTION OF TIME LIMITS WHEN AT HOME.

8

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13

## What parents need to know about The App Store



'Apps' are designed to run on certain devices and are written for a specific operating system, such as Apple iOS, Windows, or Android. The official store for the Apple iOS operating system is known as the 'App Store' and it's where you can browse and download more than 2 million apps and games to use on the iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch and other Apple devices. When your children are using the app store, you need to be aware of the risks...

**IS YOUR CHILD 13+?**  
To download and buy apps from the App Store, your child will need an Apple ID. If they have used other Apple services, such as iCloud, they can sign into the App Store with the same Apple ID. If they are aged 13 and under, they cannot sign up for an Apple ID on their own, but an adult can create an Apple ID for a child.

**LOOKALIKE APPS**  
Some developers release apps that copy the functionality, user interface and even product names and branding of popular apps. In an attempt to trick unsuspecting users to install them, by downloading an app from an unknown developer, your child could find their device compromised. Experts warn that through app purchases, hackers can potentially take photos using the camera and access media remotely, track your child's location, record any passwords they enter for other accounts, and send text messages from phones.

**IN-APP PURCHASES**  
Apps are either free, paid for or free with in-app purchases. Some developers offer optional transactions that can unlock extra functionality, virtual goods or unique content. Unless you change these settings, once your child has entered a password to make an in-app purchase, they can make additional purchases for 15 minutes without re-entering a password. This makes it extremely easy for children to accidentally run up huge bills.

**THIRD-PARTY APP STORES**  
Because the official Apple App Store has a very stringent policy about what apps it approves, children may look elsewhere for apps and games they will hear about from friends. As well as the Apple App Store for iOS, there are hundreds of other third-party app stores, but the danger is they may not apply the same level of scrutiny toward the apps they allow to be listed. There's a higher chance of apps that infect devices with malicious codes or put user privacy at risk by extracting sensitive information.

**INAPPROPRIATE APPS**  
Some apps and games have content that is unsuitable for younger children - even the most popular or innocuous looking apps may feature adult-themed content, violence or cruelty to other people, animals, unsimulated chat, pornography or sexual content.

**CREATE YOUR CHILD'S ACCOUNT**  
You can create an Apple ID for a child under 13 and add them to your family group to keep an eye on their activity. Go to Settings -> [your name] -> Family Sharing -> Add Family Member -> Create a Child Account -> Next. Enter your child's birthday and tap Next. Review the Parent Privacy Disclosure and tap Agree. With Family Sharing, you can add up to six family members to share App Store purchases, as well as iTunes and Apple Books.

**RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASES**  
You can restrict your child's ability to make in-app purchases. On an iOS device, open Settings, tap General and then Restrictions. Tap Enable Restrictions. You can put a limitation that requires a password every time there is a purchase made in the App Store or iTunes Store.

**BROWSE APPS BY AGE**  
To find apps and games that are right for your children, check the age ratings. On an iPhone or iPod Touch, this can be found in the information section on an app's product page, and on an iPad or desktop, the age range is near the Buy buttons. On the Kids page, you can find apps for age ranges, including 5 and under, 6 to 8, and 9 to 11.

**AVOID OTHER APP STORES**  
Put a rule in place that your child can only use the official App Store to download apps and games. Explain why it is wise to only install applications from a trusted source to ensure their device is not affected by security issues or virus attacks.

**HOW TO KNOW AN APP IS SAFE TO INSTALL**  
Advise your child that just because they're downloading an app from an official store, it doesn't make it safe. Fake or copied apps will often imitate the words and poor graphics, so always read the app description, and double check the developer name and rating for warning signs. Be wary of apps that not go openly searching for this content. Check the app's reviews and ratings - one star, one-line reviews complaining that an app didn't work on a certain device, or that there was a billing issue, is not a good indication.

**SPOT FAKE REVIEWS**  
When checking the customer reviews within the app store, make sure they aren't vague and generic, or overly effusive, as some developers will try to manipulate their app's position by posting fake ratings and reviews. Check the number of downloads the app claims to have - the higher the number, the more likely it is to be safe. Your child can also check on a company's website to see if the app is available on there.

SOURCES: <https://www.engadget.com/2017/12/18/fake-apps-iphone/>, <https://www.mashable.com/2017/11/06/fake-whatsapp-app-google-play-store-android/#pmpo6r6u>

It's important to note that new challenges are arising on the internet all the time. We have created to this guide to raise awareness of the issue and offer advice on helping parents to talk to their children about making safer decisions online. See also our '7 conversation starters' guide for more tips on better communication with your child.

Momo is a sinister 'challenge' that has been around for some time. It has recently resurfaced and once again has come to the attention of schools and children across the country. Dubbed the 'suicide killer game', Momo has been heavily linked with apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and most recently (and most worryingly)... YouTube Kids. The scary doll-like figure reportedly sends graphic violent images, and asks users to partake in dangerous challenges like walking up at random hours and has even been associated with self-harm. It has been reported that the 'Momo' figure was originally created as a sculpture and featured in an art gallery in Tokyo and unrelated to the 'Momo' challenge we are hearing about in the media.

## What parents need to know about MOMO

**CHILDREN'S VIDEOS BEING 'HIJACKED'**  
There have been recent reports that some seemingly innocent videos on YouTube and YouTube Kids (such as 'surprise eggs', unboxing videos and Minecraft videos) have been edited by unknown sources to include violence provoking and/or other inappropriate content. Even though YouTube monitor and remove videos that include inappropriate content, clips can be uploaded and viewed thousands of times before they get reported and removed. As a parent, it's difficult to spot these videos as the harmful content doesn't appear until partway through the video.

**DISTRESSING FOR CHILDREN**  
Popular YouTubers and other accounts have been uploading reaction videos, showing their experience of the MOMO challenge. Some of the videos include a disclosure message warning that the content may be inappropriate or offensive to some audiences, but these videos are still easily accessed by clicking 'I understand and wish to proceed'. The image of the 'Momo' character can be deeply distressing to children and young people and it's important to note that it may slip through parental settings and filters.

**SUGGESTED VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE**  
Video apps such as YouTube include an 'up next' feature which automatically starts playing another video based on the video just watched. Due to YouTube's algorithm, users are shown suggested videos that they may be interested in. The thumbnails used on suggested videos are purposefully created in a way to encourage viewers to click them. During our research, we found that when watching one Momo related video, we were shown countless other Momo themed videos and other scary content which would be age inappropriate for children under 18.

## National Online Safety Top Tips for Parents

**TELL THEM IT'S NOT REAL**  
Just like any urban legend or horror story, the concept can be quite frightening and distressing for young people. Whilst this may seem obvious, it's important for you to reiterate to your child that Momo is not a real person and cannot directly harm them. Also, tell your child to not go openly searching for this content online as it may only cause more distress.

**BE PRESENT**  
It's important for you, as a parent or carer, to be present while your children are online. This will give you a greater understanding of what they are doing on their devices, as well as providing you with the opportunity to discuss, support and stop certain activities that your child may be involved in. As the nature of each task become progressively worse it's also important to recognise any changes in your child's behaviour.

**TALK REGULARLY WITH YOUR CHILD**  
As well as monitoring your child's activity, it's important for you to discuss with them too. Not only will this give you an understanding of their online actions, but those honest and frequent conversations will encourage your child to feel confident to discuss issues and concerns they may have related to the online world.

**DEVICE SETTINGS & PARENTAL CONTROLS**  
Ensure that you set up parental controls for your devices at home. This will help to restrict the types of content that your child can view, as well as help you to monitor their activity. In addition to this, it's vital that you are aware of your device and account settings to ensure your child's utmost safety. For example, on YouTube you can turn off suggested auto-play on videos to stop your child from viewing content that they have not directly selected.

**PEER PRESSURE**  
Trends and viral challenges can be tempting for children to take part in, no matter how dangerous or scary they seem. Make sure you talk to your child about how they shouldn't succumb to peer pressure and do anything they are not comfortable with, online or offline. If they are unsure, encourage them to talk to you or another trusted adult.

**REPORT & BLOCK**  
You can't always rely on parental controls to block distressing or harmful material. People find ways around a platform's algorithm in order to share and promote this type of material. Due to this, we advise that you flag and report any material you deem to be inappropriate or harmful as soon as you come across it. You should also block the account/content to prevent your child from viewing it. Also encourage your child to record/screenshot any content they feel could be malicious to provide evidence in order to escalate the issue to the appropriate channel.

**FURTHER SUPPORT**  
Speak to the safeguarding lead within your child's school should you have any concerns regarding your child's online activity or malicious content that could affect them.

If your child sees something distressing, it is important that they know where to go to seek help and who their trusted adults are. They could also contact Childline where a trained counsellor will listen to anything that's worrying them.

The Childline phone number is 0800 1111.

# Online Bullying, Sexting and Online Grooming

What children need to know about

## ONLINE BULLYING



**Why does it happen?**

GOING ONLINE MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO SAY AND DO THINGS THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO FACE TO FACE. ONLINE BULLIES DON'T GET TO SEE THEIR VICTIMS' REACTIONS IN REAL LIFE, SO THIS CAN COOGEON THEM FROM THE REAL DAMAGE THAT THEY ARE DOING. QUITE OFTEN, PEOPLE BULLY BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING DIFFICULT THEMSELVES AND TAKING IT OUT ON OTHERS IS THE ONLY WAY THEY KNOW HOW TO GET CONTROL OF THEIR OWN EMOTIONS.

**How does it feel to be bullied?**

BEING BULLIED CAN IMPACT ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS, BECAUSE IT HAPPENS ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET OR COMPUTER, IT CAN FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNDER THREAT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS YOUR BEDROOM. DON'T FORGET...IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED.

**Am I an online bully?**

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T OBVIOUS THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG, BUT IF YOU USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO UPSET, ANGER OR EMBARRASS SOMEONE ON PURPOSE, THIS MEANS YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ONLINE BULLYING. IT MIGHT BE AS SIMPLE AS 'Liking' A MEAN POST, LAUGHING AT AN ONLINE VIDEO, OR SPREADING A RUMOUR, BUT THE PERSON BEING BULLIED COULD FEEL LIKE THEY ARE BEING GANGED UP ON. THINK ABOUT HOW IT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL IF IT HAPPENED TO YOU. EVERYONE CAN MAKE MISTAKES, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEARN FROM THEM - GO BACK AND DELETE ANY UPSETTING OR NASTY POSTS, TWEETS OR COMMENTS YOU'VE WRITTEN.

**Who do I tell?**

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE BULLYING ON YOUR OWN. TALK TO AN ADULT THAT YOU TRUST - A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR TEACHER. MOST WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES AND ONLINE GAMES OR MOBILE APPS LET YOU REPORT AND BLOCK PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTHERING YOU. YOU COULD ALSO CONTACT CHILDLINE (WWW.CHILDLINE.ORG.UK), WHERE A TRAINED COUNSELLOR WILL LISTEN TO ANYTHING THAT'S WORRYING YOU - YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME.

**How do I prove it?**

WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAPPENS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOCUMENT AND REPORT THE BEHAVIOUR, SO IT CAN BE ADDRESSED - RECORD THE DATES AND TIMES WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAS OCCURRED, AND SAVE AND PRINT SCREENSHOTS, EMAILS, AND TEXT MESSAGES.

**How can I stay safe?**

MAKE SURE YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS ARE SET SO THAT ONLY PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND TRUST CAN SEE WHAT YOU POST. NEVER GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE, SUCH AS IN PUBLIC PROFILES, CHAT ROOMS OR BLOGS, AND AVOID FURTHER COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE SENDING THE MESSAGES. KEEP AWARE OF FAME PROFILES AND INTERNET USERS PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE THAT THEY ARE NOT.

**What is online bullying?**

ONLINE BULLYING - ALSO KNOWN AS CYBERBULLYING - IS BULLYING THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE INTERNET OR VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND MOBILE PHONES. IT CAN INCLUDE:

1. SENDING SOMEONE MEAN OR THREATENING EMAILS, DIRECT MESSAGES OR TEXT MESSAGES
2. HACKING INTO SOMEONE'S ONLINE ACCOUNT
3. BEING RUDE OR MEAN TO SOMEONE WHEN PLAYING ONLINE GAMES
4. POSTING PRIVATE OR EMBARRASSING PHOTOS ONLINE OR SENDING THEM TO OTHERS
5. CREATING FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS THAT MOCK SOMEONE OR TRICK THEM
6. EXCLUDING SOMEONE FROM AN ONLINE CONVERSATION OR BLOCKING THEM FOR NO REASON

**BE KIND ONLINE**

BEFORE PRESSING 'SEND' ON COMMENTS, ASK YOURSELF THESE 3 QUESTIONS...

1. WHY AM I POSTING THIS?
2. WOULD I SAY THIS IN REAL LIFE?
3. HOW WOULD I FEEL IF SOMEBODY SAID THIS TO ME?



#WakeUpWednesday

**Did you know? IT IS ILLEGAL TO TAKE, MAKE OR SHARE AN INDECENT IMAGE OR VIDEO OF A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 18 - EVEN IF IT IS CONSENSUAL**

Sexting occurs predominantly on, but is not exclusive to these apps...

Sexting involves sending and receiving explicit messages, images or videos of a sexual nature. This content is usually uploaded on a mobile device, which can then be uploaded onto social networking sites and shared further. They can be sent to or from a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, or someone your child has met online. Sexting is often described as the new flirting for children - but it's illegal for anyone under the age of 18, with police forces in England and Wales recording 6,238 underage "sexting" offences in 2016-17, a rate of 17 a day.

## What parents need to know about SEXTING

**BREAKING THE LAW**

Sexting is illegal if you share, make, take or distribute an indecent image or video of a child under the age of 18. It is an offence under the Protection of Children Act (1978), the Criminal Justice Act (1988), and under Section 37 of the Serious Crime Act (2015). Sexting or 'you're produced sexual imagery' between children is still illegal, even if they are in a relationship and any images are shared consensually.

**CHILDREN THINK IT'S HARMLESS**

Many young people see sexting as 'banter' or a joke, an easy way to show someone they like and trust them, or just a cool thing to do. But they may not realise the consequences of sharing personal information and how it can be potentially harmful to them in the future.

**REGRETTING THEIR ACT**

Although some children are willingly exchanging images, many may regret sharing the messages, images and videos after they have sent or uploaded them. Once it's out there, there's no going back, and your child may feel ashamed, vulnerable, worried or anxious about imagery resurfacing later, especially if a relationship or friendship has broken down.

**SHARING**

Once a photo or video is out there, there's no way of knowing how many people have saved it, tagged it or shared it. Children like to show off their peers and selfies, an image has gone beyond its intended recipient, to classmates, friends, and even strangers. Once an image or video has been shared online, there's nothing to stop it being archived and repeatedly shared.

**BULLYING, COERCION & BLACKMAIL**

Your child may feel pressured into sexting so they don't come across as boring, or think it's a way to show someone they care for them. They may feel under pressure to give in to repeated requests or feel obliged to share social messages and images. Sexting can also expose young adults to the risk of being exploited by paedophiles or sexual predators, who then use images to collect additional photos, sexual favours, and sometimes money from victims.

## Top Tips for Parents

**TALK TO YOUR CHILD**

Encourage open dialogue about appropriate information to share with others both online and offline, discuss the 'code' of sexting and ensure that they know what it is and what it involves. Show that you understand that sexting can reflect external adolescent curiosity about bodies, bodies and exploring their sexuality, but explain why it's important to think twice before sharing something. Show that you are approachable and understanding.

**EXPLAIN THE REPERCUSSIONS**

Let your children know that once they have sent a message, they are no longer in control of it, and the messages, images and videos that they may intend to share with one individual may end up where the whole world can have access to them. Even if they completely trust someone, either people using their phone might accidentally see it. And, later in life, it may affect their online reputation, especially if universities, employers or future partners access the imagery.

**BLOCKING AND STOPPING SEXTING**

Show your child how to use the block button on their devices and favourite apps to stop people sending them unwanted messages. You can also set up parental controls with your internet service provider or on your child's phone to stop them from accessing harmful content.

**DISCUSS THE LEGALITIES**

Children and young people may not realise that what they are doing is illegal. Ensure that your child understands that when the law for anyone to take or have an indecent image or video of a child under 18, it is against the law for anyone to take or have an indecent image or video of a child under 18, even if it's a selfie, and even when the activity is consensual.

**HOW TO REMOVE IMAGES**

If an image has already been shared, either your child or yourself should report to the person that the image was shared with and ask them to delete it. You can also use the report button on a website where the image was shared. Speak to your child's school, as they may be able to delete images stored. If you believe the child has forced into sending the message, report this to the police. You or your child can also report the content to CEOP with one of their child protection advisors (exploitation and Online Protection Command).

**HAS YOUR CHILD RECEIVED A SEXUAL IMAGE?**

Firstly, reassure your child that they have done the right thing by speaking to you about the incident. Ask them if they requested the image or if they received it unwillingly. If the image has been sent to your child by an adult and you are concerned about sexual exploitation or grooming, contact CEOP immediately.

## What parents need to know about ONLINE GROOMING

**NUMBERS OF GROOMING OFFENCES ARE SOARING**

In April 2017, a new government law came into force in England and Wales to allow police to charge adults who send sexual messages to children through mobile phones and social media. In the first year since the law change, there were 3,000 police-recorded offences of sexual communication with a child - a figure 50 per cent higher than experts expected in the first year.

**ALL CHILDREN ARE AT RISK**

According to a 2018 NSPCC report, a quarter of young people have experienced an adult who they don't know in real life trying to contact them online. One in four said they had been sent messages, images, videos or other content that made them feel sad, worried or uncomfortable. One in 10 girls and one in 20 boys under the age of 13 said they had received unwanted sexual messages.

**CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE TARGETS**

Groomers use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate children from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. In order to seek potential victims, predators are likely to use apps and websites that are popular with children and young people. Groomers can use a 'scattergun' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chance of success.

**LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS**

Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, dares or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'likes' or even money for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, all have live streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Liveme, BIGO Live, YouTube and more.

**GROOMING CAN HAPPEN RAPIDLY**

Grooming is generally a slow, methodical and intentional process of manipulating a person to a point where they can be victimised. However, according to researchers at the University of Swansea, online grooming can also be very rapid, with analysis of Chat logs revealing that it can take just 18 minutes for some predators to arrange to meet their victim. The fastest predators used sophisticated, persuasive, language-based strategies to rapidly build trust, including the use of small talk and praise which quickly escalated into requests for sexual messages.

**ANYONE CAN GROOM YOUR CHILD**

Many people expect groomers to be adults posing as children, but this is not always the case. Data from University of Swansea reveals that groomers' use of identity deception (around age, location and appearance) is fairly low. This can be because they approach many children, limiting their ability to lie. The worry is that honesty can be more damaging to the victim as they are more likely to feel as if they are in a real relationship.

## Top Tips for Parents

**IT'S GOOD TO TALK**

It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child regularly about the risks and what they do online. By talking openly with them about online relationships, they can quickly ascertain the kind of behaviour which is appropriate or inappropriate. Ask them whether they have any online friends or if they play online games with people they haven't met. This could then open up conversations about the subject of grooming.

**DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to detect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will pay your child compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may admire how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

**DISCUSS APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with people who they do know. They should never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know. Remind them that they should never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or names of their school.

**LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS**

Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns:

- Seductive behaviour about what they are doing online.
- Internet or smartphone usage late at night.
- Going to unusual places to meet up with friends you have not heard of.
- They are clingy, have problems sleeping and eating or even bedwetting.
- A lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, which they seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.

**CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS**

In order to give your child a safer online gaming experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they may use. If you use location-sharing apps to check where your child is, remember that these could always be used by strangers to follow your child without their knowledge. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.

**BE SUPPORTIVE**

Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand that they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know that they can talk to you if someone does something they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.

**HOW TO REPORT**

If you're worried that your child is being groomed online or sexually exploited, you can report your concerns to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Safety Centre, which is part of the National Crime Agency at [www.ceop.gov.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.gov.uk/safety-centre). Reports are read by a Child Protection Advisor who will make contact by phone or email to work with you to make a plan to keep your child safe. If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999 or NSPCC on 0800 800 5000.

# REMEMBER



NM Office of  
the Attorney  
General  
505-717-3500

# IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING