

Cyberbullying by Gender

According to the Cyberbullying Research Center:

- 25% of girls are more likely to have experienced bullying versus only 16% of boys
- 21.1% of girls are more likely to report cyberbullying versus 18.3% of boys
- Girls are more likely to spread rumors via text, social media and email; boys are more likely to post harmful pictures or videos

- Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin (2010)

www.cyberbullying.us

How To Guard Against Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a serious act with grave consequences. More than 56 percent of students who were victims of cyberbullying said they felt angry, and at least 4 reported suicides in the U.S. have been connected to cyberbullying. Help guard your children and family by doing the following:

- Caution your children not to share certain information over the Internet.
- Teach your children not to react or retaliate to cyberbullying.
- Show your children how to delete and/or block harmful messages before they read them.
- Teach your children about respect and privacy and about the consequences of cyberbullying.
- Report abuses or threats to the Attorney General's office and your Internet Service Provider.

Where To Find More Information

STOP Cyberbullying
stopcyberbullying.com

National Crime Prevention Council
Cyberbullying Resources
ncpc.org/cyberbullying

NetSmartz - The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children
netsmartz.org

Wired Safety
Cyberstalking and Harassment
wiredsaftey.org

Cyberbullying Research Center
cyberbullying.us

Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
cyberbully.org

Stop Bullying Now!
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov



Attorney General Jim Hood



For more information about Internet safety and tips for parents, visit the Mississippi Attorney General's website www.agjimhood.com.

CYBER BULLYING:

What Parents **Should** Know



Prepared by the
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
Post Office Box 220 • Jackson, MS 39205-0220
(601) 359-3680 • Toll Free: (800) 829-6766
www.agjimhood.com

Cyberbullying: What you need to know

Today's young children and teens utilize technology on a daily basis. An April 2010 report by the Pew Center found that 72 percent of teens regularly text message. Teens text an average of 50 to 100 messages a day. When it comes to computers, children ages 8-18 spend an average of 1 ½ hours daily surfing the Internet, checking e-mail and social networking. (Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2010)

With this inundation of technology among teenagers, many of the social distresses and conflicts that children encounter at school and in the community have carried over into the virtual world. Sixty-five percent of middle school students have been involved directly or indirectly in a cyberbullying incident either as the cyberbully, the victim, or a friend. (Parry Aftab, Esq., Executive Director, WiredSafety.org)

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying occurs when one child or teen uses the Internet, cellphone or other type of social media to harass, embarrass or taunt another child or teen. Often, children use cyberbullying to get revenge on someone, or boost their self-esteem by putting others down. Others do it because they think it's funny or because they are bored. Some examples of cyberbullying include:

- Setting up a profile pretending to be someone else or hacking into someone's social networking profile.
- Posting photos of someone online without his or her permission.
- Harassing someone through text messages, instant messages, or in a chat room.

- Sending embarrassing photos or messages by e-mail or on a cell phone, or sharing messages with people other than the intended recipient.
- Writing harmful information or lies on a personal blog or web site.
- Sending a virus to someone's computer.



Understanding the law

Mississippi cyberstalking laws make it a felony to use electronic mail or electronic communication to:

- Threaten bodily harm to a person, or harm to his or her family or property,
- Communicate repeatedly in order to threaten, terrify, or harass a person,
- Make false statements concerning death, injury, illness, criminal conduct, or indecent conduct.

The laws also prohibit knowingly allowing anyone else to use your computer or other device to threaten, harass, or make false statements. A conviction can lead to a maximum fine of \$5,000 and up to two years in prison. (Miss. Code Ann. § 97-45-15).

Mississippi recently passed a statute which includes cyberbullying. The definition of "bullying" now includes events involving electronic communication, such as harassing emails or threatening messages online. S.B. No. 2015 (2010). Under the new law, bullying occurs when a victim reasonably perceives that he or she has been threatened or harassed. It does not matter whether the bully intended to threaten or harass the victim. Although cyberbullying usually

occurs while students are surfing the net at home, it often translates into problems at school, creating an uncomfortable learning environment. The new law allows schools to discipline cyberbullying that occurs at school or at a school sponsored function and requires students and teachers with knowledge of bullying to report it to a school official.

However, it is ultimately a parent's responsibility to detect cyberbullying at home. What parents should tell their children:

- Not to encourage or participate in cyberbullying.
- To report any cyberbullying or other bullying they witness.
- Not to just remain silent, but to speak up when a peer is being bullied. Most of the time, when a peer speaks out for a bullying victim, the bully fears social repercussions and stops.
- Empowerment is the most important tool for fighting cyberbullying!

WARNING SIGNS

A 2006 study conducted by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) found that more than 4 in 10 teenagers experienced some form of cyberbullying. Yet, only 1 in 10 of these teenagers told their parents about it. Be on the lookout for these behaviors that indicate a **child is the victim of cyberbullying**:

- Loss of interest in activities he/she once enjoyed.
- Expression of anger or sadness after being on the computer or mobile phone.
- Reluctance to attend school.