

# Cyberbullying

## Textbook

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The internet offers great connections but also big responsibilities. This chapter covers the serious effects of cyberbullying on everyone involved. We'll look at why acting when you see unsafe online behavior is crucial, focusing on both bad outcomes of doing nothing and good outcomes of reporting. Finally, we'll give you ways to fight cyberbullying and online harassment. Being a good digital citizen means protecting yourself and making the internet safer for all.

## Consequences of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying using digital devices, like phones or computers. It can happen anywhere, anytime, and spread fast. Its consequences are serious for everyone.

For the **cyberbully**, outcomes can be social or legal. They might lose friends, damage their reputation, or face school discipline like suspension. Severe cases (e.g., threats, private image sharing) can lead to legal charges, fines, or even jail, hurting future college or job chances. Bullies themselves might also face psychological issues.

For the **victim**, the effects can be devastating. They often feel sadness, anger, fear, and helplessness, leading to anxiety, depression, and losing interest in things. Stress can cause physical problems like headaches or sleep issues. Schoolwork might suffer, and they might withdraw socially. Tragically, severe cyberbullying can be linked to self-harm and suicide.

The **Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act** in Utah is an example of laws fighting bullying, including cyberbullying, in schools. It requires schools to have policies against bullying and outlines how to report and investigate incidents, ensuring a safe learning environment.

## What If You Just Do Nothing?

Doing nothing when you see unsafe online activity can have serious negative effects. If suspicious activity isn't reported, the harm often continues or gets worse. For example, ignoring cyberbullying means the victim keeps suffering, and the bully might target more people. Not reporting a phishing scam means more people could fall for it, losing money or identity.

Allowing illegal content to go unreported lets it spread. Inaction shows bad actors their behavior is tolerated, making the internet less safe for everyone. It also means losing evidence needed to stop perpetrators. The main outcomes of inaction are continued harm, increased risk for others, and a weaker online community.

## Examining the Positive Outcomes When Someone Reports Suspicious Behavior on the Internet

Reporting suspicious online behavior leads to many good outcomes, making the internet safer for all.

One immediate positive is **stopping ongoing harm**. Reporting cyberbullying to parents, school staff, or friends can quickly stop the bullying and protect the victim. Reporting phishing scams allows platforms to block bad links and warn others.

Reporting also brings **accountability for perpetrators**. Reports to adults or school staff lead to investigations and discipline. If criminal, reporting to police can lead to arrests and justice.

Finally, reporting helps **educate and improve security**. Each report teaches us about new threats, helps develop better safety tools, and creates awareness. Schools and online platforms can update policies. When peers report, it builds a stronger, more supportive online community.

## Constructing Strategies to Combat Cyberbullying or Online Harassment

Fighting cyberbullying needs everyone's help:

1. **Don't Respond:** For victims, ignoring the bully is often best. Don't give them attention.
2. **Block and Unfriend:** Immediately block the bully on all platforms and remove them from your contacts to cut off their access.
3. **Save the Evidence:** Take screenshots of all bullying messages or posts. This proof is key for reporting.
4. **Report the Behavior:**
  - **To the Platform:** Use built-in reporting tools on social media or gaming sites.
  - **To a Trusted Adult:** Tell a parent, teacher, counselor, or another adult you trust.
  - **To School Staff:** Report to principals or school resource officers, as schools have anti-bullying policies.
  - **To Law Enforcement:** If it involves threats, hate speech, or illegal content, contact the police.
5. **Seek Support:** Talk to friends, family, or a professional. Don't suffer alone.
6. **Strengthen Online Security:** Check and tighten your privacy settings on all social media. Be careful what you share.
7. **Be an Upstander:** If you see cyberbullying, don't just watch. Support the victim, report the behavior, and if safe, speak out.

8. **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about cyberbullying and share this knowledge to promote online respect.

## Critical Thinking Questions

1. The Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act fights bullying. If cyberbullying happens outside school but still affects a student's safety at school, how should the school respond under this act? What makes judging online incidents tricky?
2. Imagine you see a friend frequently cyberbullying others, but no one is reporting it. What are the possible long-term impacts of you doing nothing on your friend, the victims, and yourself? What ethical ideas might guide your choice to report or help?
3. Create a public service announcement (PSA) idea for high school students about stopping cyberbullying. Your PSA, for video or social media, should include at least two tips for victims and two for people who see bullying, showing the good things that happen when action is taken.

## Questions (5)

**1. A student is being targeted online with hurtful messages. They decide to ignore the bully and immediately block them on all social media platforms. Which two strategies to combat cyberbullying are they primarily using?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. Seeking support and educating others.
- B. Don't Respond and Block/Unfriend.
- C. Saving evidence and reporting to law enforcement.
- D. Being an upstander and strengthening online security.

**2. True or False: If their actions are severe, a cyber bully could face legal charges, fines, or even jail time.**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. False
- B. True

**3. The Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act in Utah requires schools to have policies against bullying, including cyberbullying. If cyberbullying happens outside school hours but clearly affects a student's safety and well-being at school, how should**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. The school has no jurisdiction as the bullying happened off-campus.
- B. The school should ignore it unless the bully is also a student at the same school.
- C. The school should still respond and investigate, as the act covers bullying that affects a student's safe learning environment.
- D. The school should only report it to the police, without internal action.

**4. What is a crucial reason to save evidence (e.g., screenshots) of cyberbullying messages or posts?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. To publicly shame the bully online.
- B. It is necessary proof for reporting the behavior to platforms, adults, or law enforcement.
- C. To collect mementos of the experience.
- D. It allows the victim to re-read the messages later for emotional processing.

**5. Beyond stopping ongoing harm, what is another significant positive outcome when someone reports suspicious online behavior, like a phishing scam?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. It immediately makes the internet completely secure forever.
- B. It brings accountability for perpetrators, leading to investigations and potential discipline or legal action.
- C. It automatically educates all internet users about new threats.
- D. It guarantees immediate financial compensation for any victims.

## Answer Keys & Solutions

### Questions

1. A student is being targeted online with hurtful messages. They decide to ignore the bully and immediately block them on all social media platforms. Which two strategies to combat cyberbullying are they primarily using?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Correct Answer:

- A. Seeking support and educating others. ✗ Incorrect
- B. Don't Respond and Block/Unfriend. ✓ Correct
- C. Saving evidence and reporting to law enforcement. ✗ Incorrect
- D. Being an upstander and strengthening online security. ✗ Incorrect

#### Explanation:

Consider the direct actions a victim can take to disengage from the bully.

2. True or False: If their actions are severe, a cyber bully could face legal charges, fines, or even jail time.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Correct Answer:

- A. False ✗ Incorrect
- B. True ✓ Correct

#### Explanation:

Think about the most serious repercussions for severe malicious acts.

3. The Jeffrey Johnson Stand Up for All Students Act in Utah requires schools to have policies against bullying, including cyberbullying. If cyberbullying happens outside school hours but clearly affects a student's safety and well-being at school, how should

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Correct Answer:**

- A. The school has no jurisdiction as the bullying happened off-campus. ✗ Incorrect
- B. The school should ignore it unless the bully is also a student at the same school. ✗ Incorrect
- C. The school should still respond and investigate, as the act covers bullying that affects a student's safe learning environment. ✓ Correct
- D. The school should only report it to the police, without internal action. ✗ Incorrect

**Explanation:**

Consider the scope of school anti-bullying policies, even for off-campus incidents that impact the school environment.

**4. What is a crucial reason to save evidence (e.g., screenshots) of cyberbullying messages or posts?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Correct Answer:**

- A. To publicly shame the bully online. ✗ Incorrect
- B. It is necessary proof for reporting the behavior to platforms, adults, or law enforcement. ✓ Correct
- C. To collect mementos of the experience. ✗ Incorrect
- D. It allows the victim to re-read the messages later for emotional processing. ✗ Incorrect

**Explanation:**

Think about what is needed to support a formal complaint or investigation.

**5. Beyond stopping ongoing harm, what is another significant positive outcome when someone reports suspicious online behavior, like a phishing scam?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Correct Answer:**

- A. It immediately makes the internet completely secure forever. ✗ Incorrect
- B. It brings accountability for perpetrators, leading to investigations and potential discipline or legal action. ✓ Correct

C. It automatically educates all internet users about new threats.

✗ Incorrect

D. It guarantees immediate financial compensation for any victims.

✗ Incorrect

**Explanation:**

Consider the consequences for those who commit malicious acts online.