

### What can you do as a Parent?

#### 1. Open Communication:

- **Encourage Them to Talk:** Create an environment where your child feels comfortable sharing their online experiences. Let them know they can talk to you without fear of judgment or punishment.
- **Listen Without Overreacting:** If they disclose cyberbullying, listen calmly and attentively. Avoid immediately taking away their devices, as this might discourage them from being open in the future.

#### 2. Understand the Situation:

- **Gather Information:** Ask your child to describe what has happened, who is involved, and how often the bullying occurs. Understanding the full scope will help you determine the best course of action.
- **Document the Evidence:** Encourage your child to save or screenshot any abusive messages, posts, or comments. This documentation can be crucial if you need to report the bullying.

#### 3. Teach Online Safety and Coping Strategies:

- **Privacy Settings:** Review your child's privacy settings on social media platforms to ensure they are secure. Teach them how to block or mute bullies and how to report abusive behaviour on each platform.
- **Responding to Bullying:** Advise your child not to respond to the bully, as engaging can escalate the situation. Instead, encourage them to report the behaviour and seek help.
- **Building Resilience:** Help your child develop coping mechanisms, such as not taking the bully's words to heart and finding positive ways to manage their emotions, like talking to a friend, journaling, or engaging in hobbies they enjoy.

#### 4. Report the Cyberbullying:

- **Platform Reporting:** Help your child report the bullying to the social media platform, app, or game where it occurred. Most platforms have procedures for reporting harassment and can remove harmful content.
- **School Involvement:** If the bully is a fellow student, inform the school so they can address the issue. Many schools have policies for dealing with cyberbullying, even when it occurs outside of school time.
- **Legal Action:** If the bullying is severe or involves threats of harm, consider contacting the authorities. In some cases, cyberbullying may violate laws, and legal action might be necessary to protect your child.

## 5. Emotional Support:

- **Reassure Them:** Remind your child that they are not alone and that you are there to support them. Reassure them that the bullying is not their fault.

## 6. Promote Healthy Online Habits:

- **Digital Detox:** Encourage taking breaks from social media or other online platforms if the bullying is causing distress. Time away can help your child regain perspective and emotional balance.
- **Safe Online Behaviour:** Teach your child about the importance of being respectful online and the impact their own words can have on others.

## 7. Set a Positive Example:

- **Model Good Online behaviour:** Show your child how to use social media responsibly and respectfully. Be mindful of how you talk about others online and the content you share.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep up to date with the latest social media trends and the platforms your child uses. This knowledge will help you guide and protect them more effectively.

## 8. Monitor and Adjust:

- **Regular Check-Ins:** Keep the lines of communication open. Regularly check in with your child to see how they are feeling and if the situation has improved.
- **Adjust Support as Needed:** Depending on the severity and persistence of the cyberbullying, you may need to adjust your approach. Stay flexible and responsive to your child's needs.

By taking these steps, you can help your child navigate the challenges of cyberbullying and build a stronger, more resilient digital presence.