



# Cyberbullying: THE BASICS

Cyberbullying can start with a simple message and quickly spiral out of control. It can happen anywhere at any time.

## What is cyberbullying?

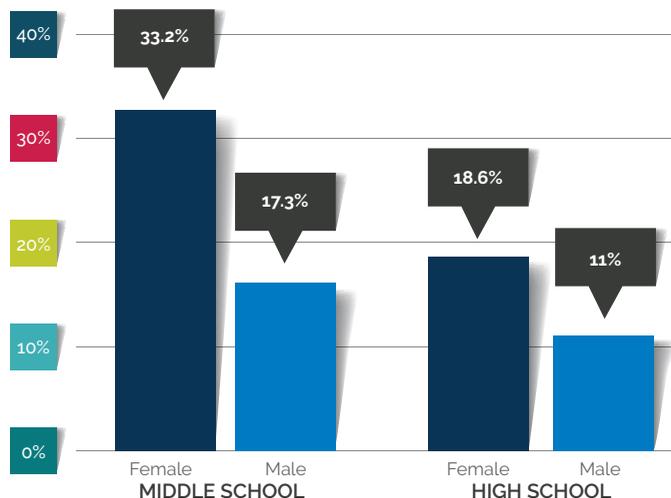
Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology including devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Cyberbullying can affect the social, emotional, and physical health of a child. Kids who are cyberbullied are more likely to use alcohol and drugs, and experience more emotional and psychological problems.

## Warning signs your child may be cyberbullied

- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Feelings of helplessness, fear, depression, or decreased self-esteem.
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.
- Seem stressed when getting an email, instant message, or text. If your child becomes withdrawn or their internet use becomes obsessive, they could either be a victim or a perpetrator of cyberbullying.



Percentage of ND middle and high school students reported being electronically bullied\* during the past 12 months.

\*including bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting; ND YRBS, 2019



## What to do if your child is being cyberbullied

- Encourage your child not to respond to or forward cyberbullying messages.
- Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying. Change phone numbers if bullying is occurring through phone or text.
- Get your child's school involved and learn about their policies. Inform law enforcement and report details if you feel something illegal has occurred.

### If your child sees someone who is being cyberbullied, tell them to:

- Not forward embarrassing photos or messages.
- Not comment on insulting or harassing posts.
- Report any instances of cyberbullying to a trusted adult.
- Support the victim by being a good friend and showing the cyberbullies they won't join in.