

WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

Cyber bullying is the use of modern communication tools such as computers and cell phones to harass and bully others. Online bullying is a rapidly growing problem. Cyber bullying occurs in a variety of ways and there are many different methods available to bully someone electronically.

Sending a threatening or hurtful email or instant message, publishing a mocking or hateful website, forwarding private or personal information to others whether in an email, instant message, picture or video, are just some of the methods online bullies use to embarrass, intimidate, harass, threaten or ridicule another person.

WHAT TO DO?

Ontario schools and the Safe Schools Act have taken a tough new stance on many behavioural issues which can range from suspension to all-out expulsion.

Durham College and UOIT have a strict Acceptable Use Policy that clearly makes it unacceptable to use technology against any member of the community (students, faculty and staff) to harass or hurt anyone.



[Acceptable Use Policy](#)



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There are limits of free-speech, self expression and creative license and understand that while we are all free to have an opinion, you will be held accountable and liable for how you express those views in our society, especially when they target another person or identifiable group.

Victims and people who know others who are being victimized can do one simple step to stop the cycle of violence and persecution. They need to tell someone about it. On campus, cyber bullying can be reported to the Campus Security Department in person or by calling 905 721 2000, ext 2400; contacting the VP Student Services at Durham College extension 2340; or contacting the Associate Provost at UOIT extension 3163. Quite often reports of cyber bullying will involve the local police authorities. Not only will they listen but they can often take quick decisive action to halt the bullying. Online resources can help too. Many resources exist online including the Kids Help Phone organization www.kidshelpphone.ca, www.cyberbullying.ca and www.bullying.org.

Victims who try to cope on their own often fall into depression, withdrawal and can even become suicidal. The problem will not simply go away on its own. If you have a friend in this situation, encourage them to get help or report the incident to protect them.

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Bullying; it's a term that conjures up all sorts of negative images and bad memories. Back in the day, bullying was something most were aware of. It normally happened to or from campus, on campus or at a campus event. The unlucky victim was constantly on the lookout for the thug who wanted to threaten, scare, or make life just plain miserable for the victim. But once the victim made it to the classroom or made it home, the bully could no longer cause harm, at least for the time being. Today the tactics, the methods and the means of bullying are changing, and changing rapidly. Bullying has taken on a new wilfully and intentionally means to embarrass, intimidate, humiliate, threaten, or harass another. Bullying has taken on a new frontier, the Internet. The following paragraphs provide important information for parents, educators and adults.

Studies suggest that cyber bullying is on the rise, and is increasing rapidly. Most cyber bullying incidents occur while logged on at home, other incidents happen in chat rooms or via instant messaging. Many cyber bullying victims personally know the bully, while others do not.

TYPES OF CYBER BULLYING

Flaming is a type of online fight. It is an act of sending or posting electronic messages that are deliberately hostile, insulting, mean, angry, vulgar or insulting, to one person or several, either privately or publicly to an online group.

Denigration also known as "dissing", occurs when a person sends or publishes cruel rumors, gossip or untrue statements about a person to intentionally damage the victim's reputation or friendships.

Bash boards are online bulletin boards where people post anything they choose. Generally, the postings are mean, hateful and malicious.

Impersonation can be particularly harmful and occurs when someone pretends to be or poses as another person. This is usually accomplished by breaking into some ones account, by stealing a password and perhaps changing it, or by maliciously using that information provided by a friend (one reason to never give a password to anyone but a trusted adult). Once the impersonator has access to the victim's information, considerable damage can occur. By sending out emails supposedly from the victim or by posting material online, the victims reputation or friendships can be totally destroyed.

Outing occurs when someone sends or publishes confidential, private, or embarrassing information, online. Private email messages or images meant for private viewing, is then forwarded to others.

Trickery is when a person purposely tricks another person into divulging secrets, private information or embarrassing information, and publishes that information online.

Exclusion is an indirect method of online bullying, intentionally excluding someone from an online group or community.

Harassment is when the electronic bully repeatedly sends insulting, hurtful, rude, insulting messages.

Happy slapping is a relatively new type of bullying. This occurs when an unsuspecting victim is physically attacked, in person, as an accomplice films or take pictures of the incident. The image or video is then posted online or distributed electronically. Often the attackers will say it was only a prank or joke, hence the term "happy slapping". Happy slapping is becoming more common, especially since many cell phones now include cameras.

Text wars or attacks are when several people gang up on the victim, sending the target hundreds of emails or text messages. Besides the emotional toil it can take on the victim, the victims' cell phone charges may escalate as well.

Online polls ask readers to vote on specific questions, often very hurtful and demeaning, such as "Who is the ugliest person in 8th grade" or "Who do you love to hate?"

Sending malicious code intentionally, to damage or harm the victim's system or to spy on the victim.

Images and videos have recently become a growing concern that many schools are taking seriously. Due in part to the prevalence and accessibility of camera cell phones, photographs and videos of unsuspecting victims, taken in bathrooms, locker rooms or other compromising situations, are being distributed electronically. Some images are emailed to other people, while others are published on video sites such as YouTube.

Educators and campus staff are also being targeted electronically. Some students intentionally provoked or humiliate the adult and the image or video is later published online.

As evident from the listing above, there are many tactics used to hurt, harass, embarrass or humiliate electronically. As with all other Internet Safety issues and concerns, it is imperative that we familiarize ourselves with these issues and techniques, in order to stay protected and be safer online.

OTHER RESOURCES:

<http://www.cyberbullyingnews.com>

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>

<http://www.google.ca/familysafety>