Talking to 14+ year olds

Before you start the conversation

- Think about when and where is the best to talk to them - in the car or a neutral place where they feel safe.
- Jot down what you want to say to focus your mind and make the conversation relevant to them.
- Be open and encouraging to make them feel supported.
- Have a few bite sized conversations to give them time to process.

What you need to know

- Having an honest relationship with your child is the first step in being able to tackle cyberbullying.
- Talk to them about their digital lives, just as you would their offline lives.
- A large majority of young people that have experienced bullying will never tell anyone or report it because of fear that it will not be taken seriously.
- Ditch the Label research found that those who have experienced bullying themselves are also twice as likely to go on and bully others.
- Bullying is a learnt behaviour - so it’s important to set a good example and regularly reinforce being a good digital citizen.
Key warning signs

- Aggressive behaviour
- Self-isolation
- Lack of appetite
- Hesitancy to go to school
- Over consumption of the internet and online games
- Sudden behavioural changes
- Visible signs of self-harm

Tips to prevent cyberbullying

- Bring digital experiences up into normal, everyday conversations.
- Remember, there is often little distinction between what your children do online and offline.
- Remind your child that they should always treat others as they want to be treated.
- Talk about prominent cases of cyberbullying in the media and any trending apps or platforms as a starting point to discuss the issue.
- Discuss the potential consequences of what they say and do online, along with the ‘stickiness’ of the web. Once it’s out there, it’s very difficult to remove content.
- Talk about how they would deal with seeing someone else being bullied and what steps to take.
- Help them to understand that their behaviour in online environments should reflect their offline behaviour.
- Check to see if they’re aware of how to report or block people on the apps they use.
- Make them aware of places to turn for help like Ditch the Label who have a dedicated online support hub and community available at www.DitchtheLabel.org.
- Encourage your child to set high privacy settings and not to connect with anybody who they don’t know offline.
- Help them gain the social and critical skills they need to navigate the online world.
Tips to deal with cyberbullying

Listen to what they have to say and make sure they know you are taking it seriously

Help them feel empowered and supported to deal with the situation

Ask them how you can help them, or what steps they want to take next

Collect evidence and together assess how serious the cyberbullying is by the impact it has had on your child

Report and block the perpetrator to the site’s administrators/moderators

If they are the perpetrator, help them understand the impact of their actions, what to do to deal with consequences and change their behaviour. It’s also important to show you understand why they are behaving in such a way

What you can do next

Check in with them regularly

Be involved in their digital life, ask them to show you the apps/games they use

Be aware of the signs of cyberbullying and keep an eye on their behaviour

Create an environment where they feel safe to talk to you or a trusted adult about what they may be going through

WANT MORE HELP?
For more information visit: internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying

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