

Introduction

Technology and social media play an ever present part in teen's lives, making them vulnerable to cyberbullying. However, there are a few things that teens can do to reduce their chances of getting bullied.

Detective Sgt Thomas Rich is a certified NJ police officer, creator and founder of Always Connected, a program developed to inform law enforcement, educators, administration, youth workers, youth groups, parents and children of all ages how to utilize technology in a positive way. He also contributed to the development of STOPit, an innovative iPhone and Android app, which is helping students, schools and parents stand up against cyberbullying by allowing students to report cyberbullying anonymously to school officials and local authorities..

Source: <https://www.momsteam.com/health-safety/10-tips-teens-prevent-cyberbullying>

Tips 1- 5

- 1. Educate yourself:** To prevent cyberbullying from occurring you must understand exactly what it is. Research what constitutes cyberbullying, how and where it occurs, and talk with your friends about what they are seeing and experiencing.
- 2. Protect your password:** Safeguard your password and all private information from inquisitive peers. You don't want to give bullies the opportunity to post false/private/embarrassing information or pictures on your social media pages or send them to the whole school through email.
- 3. Keep photos PG:** Before sending a racy photo of yourself to a peer or posting it online, consider if this is something you would want others to see, especially your family. Bullies can use this picture as ammunition to make your life miserable.
- 4. Pause before you post:** Don't post anything that can compromise your reputation. People will judge you based on how you appear to them online, and like point #3, bullies can use it as fuel.
- 5. Raise awareness:** Bring awareness to cyberbullying whether it be through a movement, a club an event or campaign. Knowledge is power.

Tips for Parents

What To Do When Your Child is Cyberbullied
Top Ten Tips for Parents
Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.

Finding out that your child is being cyberbullied is painful. Here's what to do:

- 1. MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS (AND FEELS SAFE):** The safety and well-being of your child should always be the foremost priority. Convey unconditional support. Parents must demonstrate to their children through words and actions that they both desire the same end result: stopping the cyberbullying.
- 2. TALK WITH AND LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD:** Engage your child in conversation about what's going on in a calm manner. Refrain from "freaking out." Take the time to learn exactly what happened, and the exact context in which it occurred. Also, don't minimize the situation or make excuses for the aggressor.
- 3. COLLECT EVIDENCE:** Print out or make screenshots or recordings of conversations, messages, pictures, videos, and any other items which can serve as clear proof that your child is being cyberbullied. Keep a record of any and all incidents to assist in the investigative process. Also, keep notes on relevant details like location, frequency, severity of harm, third-party involvement or witnesses, and the backstory.
- 4. WORK WITH THE SCHOOL:** All schools in the U.S. have a bullying policy, and most cover cyberbullying. Seek the help of administrators if the target and aggressor go to the same school. Your child has the right to feel safe at school, and educators are responsible to ensure this through an investigative and appropriate response.
- 5. REFRAIN FROM CONTACTING THE PARENTS OF THE ONE DOING THE BULLYING:** Some parents confronted with accusations that their child's engaging in cyberbullying may become defensive and therefore may not be receptive to your thoughts. Be judicious in your approach to avoid additional drama and possible retaliation.
- 6. CONTACT THE CONTENT PROVIDER:** Cyberbullying violates the Terms of Service of all legitimate service providers (websites, apps, gaming networks, Internet or cell phone companies). Regardless of whether your child can identify who is harassing them, contact the relevant provider. An updated list of contact information can be found here: <https://www.cyberbullying.org/what-to-do-when-your-child-is-cyberbullied>
- 7. IF NECESSARY, SEEK COUNSELING:** Your child may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional. Children may prefer to dialogue with a third party who may be perceived as more objective.
- 8. IF THE BULLYING IS BASED ON RACE, SEX, OR DISABILITY, CONTACT THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS:** The U.S. Department of Education takes these cases very seriously if children are limited or restricted in their ability to learn and thrive at school because of discrimination.
- 9. CONTACT THE POLICE WHEN PHYSICAL THREATS ARE INVOLVED:** Most states have laws related to online threats, and law enforcement can assist in these cases either informally or formally. If your local department is not helpful, contact county or state law enforcement officials, as they often have more resources and expertise in technology-related offenses.
- 10. IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO PREVENT IT FROM REOCCURRING:** If your child is being bullied through social media (YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.), set up privacy controls within each platform to block the person doing the bullying from contacting them, and then report the user. Advise your child to keep talking to you before social issues flare up into major situations.

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Source: <https://cyberbullying.org/what-to-do-when-your-child-is-cyberbullied>

Tips 6 - 10

- 6. Set up privacy controls:** Restrict who can see your online profiles to only trusted friends.
- 7. "Google" yourself:** Every once in a while search our name on all major search engines and see if any personal information or photos come up. If you find something that can be used by cyberbullies to target you, take action and have it removed.
- 8. Never open messages from people you don't know:** Delete all messages without reading them from people you don't know, as they could contain viruses and infect your computer. The same goes for messages from known bullies. It is best to not engage and ignore them.
- 9. Don't be a cyberbully:** remember the phrase your parents instilled in you as a kid "treat other as you want to be treated". If you are mean to others online, it reinforces the idea that that kind of behavior is acceptable.
- 10. Log out of your accounts on public computers:** Similar to not sharing your passwords, don't give anyone the slightest chance to pose as you or to share false information. Also, by staying logged in, you run the risk of the bully changing your password and locking you out for a period of time

