Safety Tips on Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of information communications technology (particularly mobile phones and the Internet) to deliberately upset someone else. And, although it can happen to anyone of any age, young people are its main victims.

Using the Internet and technology should be a positive experience for young people, and for most of them it is. Unfortunately, young people can also use technology in negative ways. When a young person is bullied or harassed via the Internet or mobile phone by his peers, the Internet is no longer a safe or enjoyable place for them and instead becomes a source of anxiety and fear.

In various research studies conducted around the world, as many as one-third of young people surveyed have experienced cyber bullying. Young people can be participants as much as they can be victims of cyber bullying, and there are risks to anyone who engages in such behaviour. Harassing or bullying anyone (whether online or offline) can be considered a criminal offense.

Technology	Great for..	Examples of misuse
Mobile phones	Keeping in touch by voice or text, and taking and sending pictures and films. Useful in emergency situations and for allowing children a greater sense of independence.	Sending nasty calls or text messages, including making threats, intimidation and harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating images. Filming others being harassed and sending them to other phones or Internet sites.
Instant Messenger(IM)	Text or voice chatting live with friends online. Is a quick and effective way of keeping in touch, even while working on other things on the computer.	Sending nasty messages or content. Using someone else's account to forward rude or mean messages via their contacts list.
Chat rooms and message boards	Groups of people around the world can text or voice chat live about common interests. For young people, this can be an easy way to meet new people and explore issues which they are too shy to talk about in person.	Sending nasty or threatening anonymous messages. Groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals. Making friends under false pretences (i.e. people pretending to be someone they're not in order to get personal information that they can misuse in a range of ways, e.g. for blackmail).
Email	Sending electronic letters, pictures, and other files quickly and cheaply anywhere in the world.	Sending nasty or threatening messages. Forwarding unsuitable content, including images and video clips, or sending computer viruses.
Social networking sites	Socialising with your friends and making new ones within online communities. Allowing young people to be creative online, by providing simple-to-use personal online profiles	Posting nasty comments, humiliating images or videos. Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private

	and homepages, enabling people to create and upload content easily.	information public. Groups of people picking on individuals by excluding them. Creating fake profiles to pretend to be someone else and getting others into trouble.

So, what advice can parents, teachers and caregivers give to young people on the topic of cyber bullying?

1. Think about what you post.

Be cautious about sharing anything personal online, even with people you know or even in a private email or text conversation. The information or conversation could be copied and made public by anyone you share it with, and once it's on the Internet, it's tough to remove it.

2. Be nice online.

Treat people the way you'd want to be treated. You could increase the chances of making yourself the target of cyber bullying by saying mean or disrespectful things about others online.

3. Do not retaliate.

If someone says or does something online that makes you uncomfortable, it is best to ignore them or block them altogether. Retaliation can encourage the bully to continue.

4. Report bad behaviour to someone you know.

If someone continues to cyber bully you (online or through your mobile phone), tell your parents, teacher, or other adult that you trust.

5. Report bad behaviour to the service provider.

You should also report any cyber bullying to the service provider of the email service, phone service, instant messaging system, social network or other online service that is being used by the person who is bullying you. If the content is illegal or breaks their terms of service, the service provider can sometimes remove the disparaging content from the Internet. If the behaviour is extreme enough, they may also provide appropriate account information and content to law enforcement in compliance with legal processes.

6. Save the evidence.

If the behaviour continues and becomes increasingly extreme, work with your parents or another adult to save the offending messages, pictures or copies of online conversations. More serious forms of cyber bullying should be reported to the police.

7. Don't participate.

Even if you aren't the bully, do not be a participant by simply watching someone else bully another classmate or peer. Stand up for the victim and report it to your parents, teachers, or other adult you trust who may be able to do something about it.

Contacting Service Providers

Below is a list of contact information for some of the more popular social networking and instant messaging sites, which you can use to report cyber bullying.

•Bebo: Click on the "Report Abuse" link below the photo of a user's profile or below any specific content. Or submit a report at http://www.bebo.com/ContactUs.jsp

•Facebook: Go to http://www.facebook.com/help.php?hq=report+abuse

•Friendster: Go to the direct link at the bottom of profile pages or click the "Report Abuse" button on Group pages.

•MySpace: Click on the "Contact Myspace" link at bottom of any page or go to http://www.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=misc.contact

•MSN Messenger: Click the "Help" tab and choose the "Report Abuse" option or go to https://support.live.com/eform.aspx?productKey=wlmessengerabuse&ct=eformts

•Yahoo! Messenger: Click the "Help" tab and choose the "Report Abuse" option, or go to http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/abuse/

You can also download this guide (Trend Micro Safety Tips on Cyberbullying) in PDF format.