Understanding Cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying refers to harmful behavior that takes place over digital channels and devices. The behavior is typically repeated over time, creating a situation that is difficult for the victim to separate from. One challenging aspect of modern bullying is that it can take place online, but also follow kids into a physical setting.

Cyberbullying can be displayed in many forms, such as:

Sending hurtful messages individually or in a group.

Encouraging self harm or suicide on social media.

Verbally abusing other players during gaming.

Using technology to exclude others socially.

Impersonating people or sending messages via fake accounts.

How do I recognize cyberbullying?

Noticeable negative reactions such as hiding screens when other people are present, or hesitance to explain what they are doing online.

Loss of confidence and increased negative self talk.

Withdrawing from friends and family, or activities they previously enjoyed.

What should I do if my child is cyberbullied?

Ask questions and talk calmly about the problem. Look for solutions, but don't forget to be a good listener.

Screenshot each instance of bullying, report the user using platform safety tools, and consider blocking them so there is no further contact.

Escalate as needed. Serious threats should be reported to school administrators and law enforcement.

What if my child is a cyberbully?

Discuss the value of kindness, along with the long term importance of maintaining a positive digital reputation.

Use a family online safety agreement and consider a loss of tech privileges until negative behaviors have been corrected.

All children make mistakes. Remember that the problem is the behavior, not the child.

For more information:
cyberbullying.org | stopbullying.gov | UNICEF.org/parenting