



What do I do if I am being cyberbullied?

Report Cyberbullying

If you, your child, or loved one, is in emotional distress, call or text the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline anytime.

When cyberbullying happens, it is important to document and report the behavior so it can be addressed.

Immediately;

1. Do NOT immediately report the perpetrator's account on social media. If the cyberbullying warrants local law enforcement involvement due to threats of physical violence, sexually explicit materials of minors, or other offensive messages, law enforcement may subpoena Social Media platforms for information on the perpetrator. If social media companies ban an account prior to this subpoena, critical evidence could be lost. Always immediately report any messages to law enforcement that contain the following content prior to reporting the account:
 - a. Threats of violence
 - b. Child pornography or sending sexually explicit messages or photos
 - c. Taking a photo or video of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy
 - d. Stalking and hate crimes
2. Gather Evidence
 - a. Screenshots Aren't Enough
 - i. Record your screen while scrolling through the messages (especially on Snapchat or IG stories)
 - ii. Save usernames, emails, phone numbers, userIDs, gammertags, timestamps, and context
 - iii. Don't just screenshot, create a timeline of events
 - b. Use a Second Device
 - i. Use your phone to record the bullying from a secondary device if the original app doesn't allow saving or notifies the sender
 - ii. Copy all evidence to two external USB drives and/or backup one version to the cloud.
 - c. Preserve Metadata
 - i. Export chat logs or files when possible
 - ii. Don't crop screenshots, keep the entire frame intact
 - d. Apps like Bark or Qustodio can help monitor activity, but they often miss private DMs or "vault" apps. If you're seeing red flags, go straight to manual review.
 - e. Write a detailed typed statement explaining the situation and how it has made you feel.
3. Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.
4. Block the person who is cyberbullying.
5. Only after all evidence has been collected and approval given by law enforcement if necessary, should the victim report the account to online platforms.





Report Cyberbullying to Schools

Cyberbullying can create a disruptive environment at school and is often related to in-person bullying. The school can use the information to help inform prevention and response strategies. The first step for victims of cyberbullying is to report the incident to the associated schools.

Ohio law requires every public school district to create a written anti-HIB policy that is:

- Developed with input from staff, parents, students, and community members
- Shared in student handbooks or conduct guides
- Included in employee training materials
- Reviewed annually with custodial parents or guardians
- Updated to address electronic bullying and violence in dating relationships

Schools must also:

- Train staff to recognize and respond to bullying
- Provide age-appropriate instruction to students each year
- Enforce the policy consistently and respond promptly to all reports

When reporting cyberbullying to a school:

1. Submit a report to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another administrator. If the bullying is from a student attending a different school, report it to both schools (the victim's and the perpetrator's).
2. Be clear and formal, a written complaint (email or letter) is better than just verbal.
3. Use School Resources
 - a. Schools are required to investigate reported incidents and take steps to protect the victim.
 - b. Keep parents/guardians informed of the process.

If your school is failing to act, you can request a copy of the board-approved policy and submit a formal written complaint.

Report Cyberbullying to Law Enforcement

Cyberbullying is considered a crime in Ohio and should be reported to law enforcement. By reporting to law enforcement, families can be assured that at the very least, the incident is documented.

Ohio law doesn't always use the word "cyberbullying," but the legal definition clearly includes it. Under Ohio Revised Code 3313.666, harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) includes any intentional written, verbal, electronic, or physical act that is directed at a particular student more than once, causes mental or physical harm, and is severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create a threatening, intimidating, or abusive educational environment, including violence within a dating relationship.

Critical and timely reporting to law enforcement should be done for cyberbullying cases that also include the following:

- Threats of violence





- Child pornography or sending sexually explicit messages or photos
- Taking a photo or video of someone in a place where he or she would expect privacy
- Stalking and hate crimes

When reporting cyberbullying to law enforcement, do NOT immediately report the perpetrator's account on social media. If the cyberbullying warrants local law enforcement involvement due to threats of physical violence, sexually explicit materials of minors, or other offensive messages, law enforcement may subpoena social media platforms for information on the perpetrator. If social media companies ban an account prior to this subpoena, critical evidence could be lost.

Examples of Cyberbullying that Breaks the Law in Ohio

- Text messages or DMs threatening or mocking another student
- Verbal harassment conducted over online platforms even if its non-persistent such as online gaming platforms or Snapchat
- Fake social media accounts created to impersonate or harass
- Group chats used to target and isolate a student
- Posts, memes, or videos shared to humiliate someone online
- Threatening boyfriends/girlfriends or ex's that you will leak pictures, DMs or other private information

