



# Online bullying, abuse and harassment advice for families



Each case of online bullying is different and each child will respond differently to being bullied. There's no fool-proof way to tell if your child is being bullied online, but you can try asking them about it in a non-confrontational way.

## Tips if your child is being bullied online

**Stay calm:** Your child needs to be able to talk to you and know that you'll be level headed, thoughtful and helpful in your response.

**Evaluate the situation:** It's important to know exactly what's going on before you can work out what to do next. Is it a few off-hand remarks, or is it something more serious?

## Understand how your child is being affected:

Every child is different, and behaviour that deeply affects one child may be water off a duck's back to another. If your child is upset about a situation, let them know that you understand and it's OK to be upset.

**Don't take away the technology:** Taking away your child's laptop or phone can alienate them from one of their most important support networks – their peers.

**Teach your child how to use the features available on most social networking sites:** Teach them how to block, unfollow and unfriend people. You should also show them how to report content on each of the platforms they use.

If you need help or advice about online bullying or another online safety topic contact Netsafe.

Our helpline is open seven days a week from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am – 5pm on weekends and public holidays.



Call toll free from anywhere in NZ on  
**0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723)**



Fill out an online report form [netsafe.org.nz/report](https://netsafe.org.nz/report)



Email us [help@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:help@netsafe.org.nz)

## Did you know there's a law to help?

The Harmful Digital Communications Act (the Act) is a New Zealand law made to help minimise the harm caused by online bullying, abuse and harassment.

Netsafe runs a free and confidential service to help people being bullied, including letting them know what options are available to them under the Act.

## You may be able to get help under the Act if

- 1 Someone is posting or sending messages about your child; and
- 2 The posts or messages make your child feel very upset; and
- 3 The posts or messages do any of these things
  - Encourage your child to hurt themselves
  - Share intimate images (leaked nudes and revenge porn)
  - Encourage other people to send harmful messages to your child
  - Contain content most people would think is very offensive
  - Share sensitive, private or confidential information about your child without their permission
  - Make a false allegation about your child
  - Puts your child down because of their colour, race, ethnic or national origins, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
  - Contain content that is indecent or obscene
  - Threaten to hurt your child or damage your property

Netsafe has been chosen by the New Zealand government to help people with online bullying, harassment and abuse under the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015.

Find out more at [netsafe.org.nz/HDC](https://netsafe.org.nz/HDC)