Cyberbullying conversation starters: Talking to 14+ years olds

Before you start the conversation

- Think about when and where best to talk to them - in the car or a neutral place where they feel safe
- Jot down what you want to say to focus your mind, and make the conversation relevant to them
- Be open and encouraging to make them feel supported
- Have a few bite sized conversations to give them time to process

What you need to know

- Having an honest relationship with your child is the first step in being able to tackle cyberbullying
- Talk to them about their digital lives, just as you would their offline lives
- A large majority of young people that have experienced bullying will never tell anyone or report it because of fear that it will not be taken seriously
- Bullying is a learnt behaviour - so it’s important to set a good example and regularly reinforce being a good digital citizen

Key warning signs

- Aggressive behaviour
- Self-isolation
- Lack of appetite
- Hesitancy to go to school
- Over consumption of the internet and online games
- Sudden behavioural changes
- Visible signs of self-harm

Ditch the Label research found that those who have experienced bullying themselves are also twice as likely to go on and bully others
Tips to prevent cyberbullying

- Bring digital experiences up into normal, everyday conversations
- Remember, there is often little distinction between what your children do online and offline
- Remind your child that they should always treat others as they want to be treated
- Talk to them about any prominent cases of cyberbullying in the media or about new trending apps or platforms

- Discuss the potential consequences of what they say and do online, along with the ‘stickiness’ of the web. Once it’s out there, it’s very difficult to remove content
- Talk about how they would deal with seeing someone else being bullied and what steps to take
- Help them to understand that their behaviour in online environments should reflect their offline behaviour
- Check to see if they’re aware of how to report or block people on the apps they use and encourage high privacy settings and not to connect with anybody they don’t know

Tips to deal with cyberbullying

- Listen to what they have to say and make sure they know you are taking it seriously
- Help them feel empowered and supported to deal with the situation
- Ask them how you can help them, or what steps they want to take next
- Collect evidence and together assess how serious the cyberbullying is

Want more help?
For more information visit: internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying

Helping parents keep their children safe online.