



# Online Safety Newsletter

April 2024

## Cyberbullying



### What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying online and can take many forms such as sending malicious messages, leaving nasty comments, excluding somebody from a group chat, blackmailing or setting up a fake profile. Cyberbullying can

take place across many different platforms such as WhatsApp, Snapchat and on games such as Roblox and Minecraft.

### What should I do if my child is being bullied online?

If your child is being bullied, then try to stay calm and let them know that it is not their fault. It is always useful to keep evidence of any online bullying and inform their school so that they are aware. Show your child how to block and/or report any users/content and review their privacy settings to limit what others can see. You may also wish to set up any parental controls that are available.

### Further information

There is a vast amount of information available online about cyberbullying. The following links provide further information on types of online bullying, how to support somebody who is being bullied and who you can contact if

you need any further advice or support.

- <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/online-bullying/>
- <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/bullying/>

## Group Chats

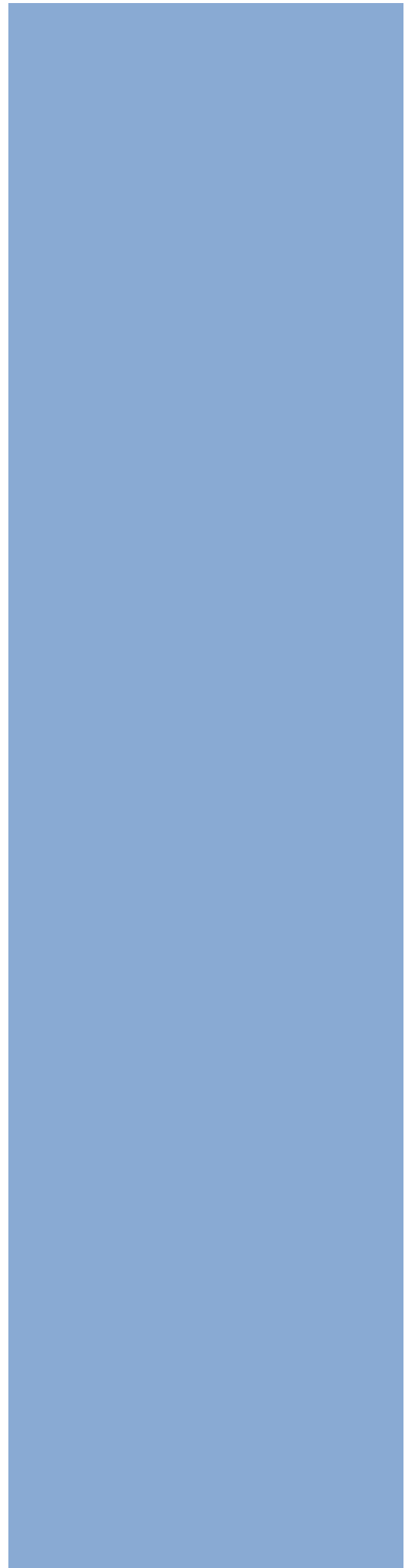
Group Chats are available on various messaging apps, social media apps and in some games. When your child is part of these groups, they may not know all the other members and it may even include people that they have previously blocked. Your child may come across inappropriate content and bullying can take place within these groups. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face.

The NSPCC provide further information about group chats here:  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

## Online Challenges

Our children may not have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse all situations yet so **it is important to talk to your child about hoaxes and challenges** that may appear on the internet. Some challenges are fun and provide no risk, however there will be

**You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok.**



TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. Some of the videos may not be appropriate for your child to view and there is also the risk of strangers contacting your child. If your child is using TikTok then make sure appropriate security/privacy settings are applied.

### **Account set up**

As always, it is important that when setting up an account, your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15. In addition, advertisements are tailored to their age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private and we would recommend keeping it as this. This means your child must approve follower requests. You can read more about the other settings available, such as switching off comments and switching on restricted mode here: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings>.

### **Family Pairing**

This allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode. You can find out more here: <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/>

### **Inappropriate content, themes and challenges on TikTok**

Whilst against TikTok's guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be dangerous. If your child is using TikTok, chat to them regularly about what they are viewing.

### **Trends and Influencers**

We often see trends on social media, for example a latest trend found is around skin care routines, which can lead to children purchasing products that are completely unsuitable/dangerous for their skin. You can find out more here: <https://www.bark.us/blog/skin-care-tweens/>. Influencers are people who have a large following on social media who through recommendations and promotions, influence the behavior or buying habits of others. The NSPCC discuss what we need to be aware of here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/2023-05-16-the-influence-of-influencers/>

### **Stranger contact**

Talk to your child about who is following them online and ensure that they understand that people may not be who they say they are when online. It is important that children know not to share personal information.

### **Blocking and Reporting**

Ensure your child knows how to use the safety features available to them, including how to report comments, direct messages and another user.

### **Further information**

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok>