

# CYBERBULLYING

**Cyberbullying** is the intentional and malicious act of hurting, humiliating, threatening, harassing, or embarrassing an individual electronically. These attacks are done via text, email, social media apps, or other online platforms. Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending, uploading, or posting hurtful, threatening, embarrassing, false, or humiliating messages or comments, including images or videos, and without the consent of the individual
- Using an individual's password to access their social accounts, or creating an account to impersonate them, with the intent to send hurtful or threatening messages to others
- Creating online surveys or polls to encourage others to rate an individual in negative ways
- Harassing, embarrassing, threatening, or "ganging up" on an individual through online gaming platforms via in-game messages or during game-play

## Signs of Cyberbullying

Someone who is being bullied may:

- Reduce, avoid, or increase amount of time spent on phone or computer
- Block or delete numbers or accounts from their phone or apps
- Express feelings of anger, anxiety, paranoia, or withdrawal after receiving messages or notifications

- Become secretive with phone or computer use
- Engage in anti-social behaviour or withdraw from friends, family, social situations, or social media, which may lead to reluctance to leave home
- Get lower grades in school
- Experience changes in mood, appetite, sleep, or unexplained body pains such as headaches or stomachaches
- Experience a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Make comments regarding self-harm or suicide





## Consequences of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be perpetrated by a student, faculty, or staff member with the target being any member of the school community. Victims of cyberbullying may experience short- and long-term psychological, behavioural, and social impacts, including:

### Psychological

- feeling anxious, depressed, and hopeless
- experiencing a loss of self-esteem and self-worth
- thinking about self-harm and suicide

### Behavioural

- engaging in self-isolation, embarrassed to face others
- struggling to concentrate or maintain focus
- considering vengeful activities to “strike back” at the bully
- using drugs or alcohol to help cope
- hurting/harming oneself or attempting suicide

### Social

- being excluded or ostracized

The perpetrators, having perhaps been bullied at one point, may also experience the impacts outlined above. In addition, bullies may lose their jobs, be expelled or suspended from school, and be charged with a criminal offense.

## Don't Be a Bystander

You may witness cyberbullying anywhere on the internet and, with a massive user-base, it is easy to assume that someone else may step-in. Unfortunately, most bystanders do not intervene due to fears of being the next target. It can feel even riskier if the bully is in a position of authority. However, in these times it is critically important to remember the words of Albert Einstein, “The world will be destroyed, not by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.”

## Taking Action Against Cyberbullying

**Speak up.** Tell a trusted colleague, friend, mentor, or teacher. Reach out to community supports, including mental health and wellness. File a police report, if needed.

**Report or block the person/group.** Take advantage of the report and block functions within all social media sites and online gaming platforms. These can almost always be done anonymously, helping to create a safe space.

**Gather evidence.** Save emails, texts, copies of posts, screen captures, and any other content that would be considered evidence of the cyberbullying.

**Be an ally.** Provide support to victims by helping them speak up, block, and gather evidence. Help create a safe space for someone to share their experience; check in on victims regularly.

## Reporting Cyberbullying at YU/TFS

Every member of the school community has a right to feel safe. Yorkville University's and Toronto Film School's Student Conduct Policy makes cyberbullying an offence with penalties that range from warnings to expulsion, and the University has a Harassment and Discrimination policy that makes any sort of harassment or bullying by any member of the University community an offence. Both policies allow any member of the community to make a complaint.

As a first step, students can informally address the situation by confronting the individual and telling them that their behaviour is inappropriate and must immediately stop. If the cyberbully is a student, the campus Student Conduct Officer can be asked to address and resolve the issue. If the cyberbully is an employee of the University, a student can contact the University Human Resources department, or the employee's supervisor.

## Resources

**Bullying Canada Support Line.** Available 24/7 at **1-877-352-4497**

### TFS/YU Mental Health and Wellness Counsellors

For TFS book at [tfs.janeapp.com](https://tfs.janeapp.com)

For YU book at [yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com](https://yorkvilleu-bc.janeapp.com)

**Human Resource Department of Yorkville University.** (1-866-838-6542), for more information regarding formal and informal reporting procedures.