STAYING INFORMED
CYBERYBULLYING LAWS & LEGISLATION

Cyberbullying is a serious issue that is hurtful and potentially damaging to a person. Cyberbullying is using the Internet, cell phones, or other technology to send or post texts or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. While no national law against cyberbullying currently exists, many states have put anti-cyberbullying laws into effect.

To find out your state's status on cyberbullying laws and legislation, contact your local law enforcement or visit these websites:

+ **www.bullypolice.org**   A comprehensive website that lists bullying and cyberbullying laws state by state.
+ **www.cyberbullying.us**   A website that houses information on cyberbullying laws, policies, and research.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED AGAINST THE LAW?

While laws against cyberbullying vary state to state, here are some things that are generally included in cyberbullying laws:

+ Harassment via computer, telephone, cell phone, or text messaging device.

+ Any verbal, textual, or graphic communications that would cause fear of physical harm, intimidation, humiliation, or embarrassment to another person.

+ Any threatening communication sent electronically to another person.

+ Any explicit pictures intended to harm another person.

+ Sexting is often included in cyberbullying legislation. Keep in mind sexting is illegal in some states.

IF YOU ARE BEING CYBERBULLIED OR HARASSED

+ Keep a hard copy of all emails, IMs, or communication for evidence.

+ Keep a record of bullying incidents. This is another helpful tool if the situation escalates and law enforcement needs to intervene.

+ If possible, report the person or crime to the website's administrators. Websites like Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace have safety centers to report cyberbullying or cyber crimes.

+ Do not seek revenge and cyberbully back.

For more information check out www.ncpc.org

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THERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED TO PREVENT CYBERBULLYING

+ Call your local law enforcement to see how you can get involved.

+ Educate your community on cyberbullying—what it is and what can be done to prevent it.

+ Create a Cyberbullying Advisory Group to get others involved in the fight against cyberbullying.

+ Get all the stakeholders involved: educators, school board members, parents, community leaders, volunteers, victim service providers, youth, and anyone else who has an interest in preventing cyberbullying.

+ Work with local schools to implement or update an anti-bullying code of conduct to include cyberbullying.

+ **Stay informed!** Look out for new laws being passed and new ways you can get involved.

SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

Whether or not your state has laws against cyberbullying, there is no reason why local schools should not incorporate anti-cyberbullying language into their school codes of conduct. Here are some suggestions for incorporating anti-cyberbullying policies into your code of conduct:

+ Create a code of conduct that includes both bullying and cyberbullying.

+ Incorporate strong definitions of cyberbullying, bullying, and harassment.

+ Clearly state what behaviors and actions will not be tolerated and the consequences that will follow.

+ Spell out what websites are prohibited and what are considered inappropriate ways to use permitted websites.

+ Mandate cyberbullying and Internet safety trainings for faculty and students.

+ Consider having a "zero-tolerance" code of conduct where no bullying or cyberbullying is tolerated.

+ Make sure to enforce the code of conduct. Students won't take it seriously if the school does not.

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