

## 7 Signs Your Child Is Being Bullied Online

For many parents the world of cyberbullying is uncharted territory – something they've never dealt with first hand and may find difficult to address with their teen.

Here are 7 signs to look for:

1. **They are being secretive with their devices.**

Although no teen wants their parents looking at their messages and they are entitled to privacy, if your teen becomes more protective of their device suddenly, then this is a red flag.



2. **They are constantly checking their device.**

We all know that our teen can be addicted to their devices, but if they seem unwilling to part from it (won't leave it alone at the dinner table), then you might want to ask if everything is okay.

3. **They are reluctant to switch off at night.**

Being physically joined to their device will not just be a problem during the daytime, but in the evenings when their peers (and the potentially bully) are most likely to be online, so their anxiety might be heightened later at night, or around bedtime.

4. **They are having extreme moods.**

It might seem logical that all children being bullied would have their confidence knocked, so instead be on the lookout for extreme moods that might indicate there is something more going on

5. **They don't want to go to school.**

Obviously, lots of teens complain about going to school and can go through phases of being difficult. but a prolonged refusal to go to school (especially if it is uncharacteristic) is a sign that everything isn't right. In fact, 40% of bullying victims expressed a desire to stop going to school.

"It's common for online bullying to be perpetrated by school peers or a continuation of what's going on at school. If they don't want to go to school it is an alarm bell,"

6. **They have lots of unexplained illness.**

Having a teen that frequently complains of unexplained ailments, especially those that occur when in having to go to school or on social occasions, is another sign for parents to watch out for.

7. **They are suffering with anxiety or becoming withdrawn.**

Although they may not suffer a loss of self-esteem, your child could become withdrawn (20% of cyberbullying victims do), suffer anxiety (23%), have panic attacks (6%) or become depressed (11%). "You might feel like your child has



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withdrawn into themselves and is becoming secretive. Encourage them to talk to someone they trust - even if it's not you."

If you're worried that your child is being bullied online, you should tell them you want to help and will do all you can to stop it. Depending on the severity of the bullying it may be necessary for the school or the police to become involved. Keep all emails, nasty messages and screen shots of any social media posts as evidence.

Further support:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/schools/health/cybersafety/pages/cybersafety-qss>

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