

When is cyberbullying actually cyberbullying?

Ages 5–8



THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

When is cyberbullying actually cyberbullying?

OBJECTIVE

To be able to recognize when cyberbullying is happening.

OUTCOME

To recognize the difference between a helpful comment and a rude comment.

To recognize the difference between a joke and cyberbullying.

1. You look lovely

2. You look ugly

3. Why are you wearing that dress?

4. The picture makes you look dark

5. I like the color of your lipstick

6. You can't smile properly

7. Your teeth are dirty and disgusting

10 MINS

5-8 YRS

When is cyberbullying actually cyberbullying?

OBJECTIVE

To be able to recognize when cyberbullying is happening.

OUTCOME

To recognize the difference between a helpful comment and a rude comment.
To recognize the difference between a joke and cyberbullying.

MATERIALS

A copy of the comments below for the first activity (you can use the accompanying slides),
3 scraps of paper and pen for the second activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

ACTIVITY 1

1. Introduce the exercise to the children, and present the objectives and outcomes.
2. Ask all the children to stand up, and read out the following scenario to them -
"Sarah put up a picture of herself on Facebook and received the following comments."
3. Show the following comments one-by-one and tell the children to sit down if they think Sarah is being cyberbullied. (The correct answers are in blue.) Ensure all children are standing again before showing the next comment. Discuss as and when -
 - "You look lovely." (No)
 - "You look ugly." (Yes)
 - "Why are you wearing that dress?" (Could be but needs clarification from the writer.)
 - "The picture looks dark." (Could be but needs clarification from the writer.)
 - "I like the color of your lipstick." (No)
 - "You can't smile properly." (Yes)
 - "Your teeth are dirty and disgusting." (Yes)
4. End the exercise by telling the children how important it is to be able to accurately recognize cyberbullying. Advise them to ask an adult if they are ever unsure.

ACTIVITY 2

Only conduct this activity if you feel it is appropriate with the age group and if there are 6 or more children.

5. Ask one of the children to volunteer as a cyber victim, and then ask them to go outside the room, so they cannot hear the classroom conversation.
6. Choose 3 other children to each write the same rude comment in their own way on a piece of paper. Ensure that only one of the comments has 'lol' written at the end, as this one will appear as the jokey comment. For example - "You're fat lol," "You smell lol."

Then get the children to fold up their comments and hand them to you.

7. Tell the 'cyber victim' to come back inside and give them all 3 papers to read one-by-one.
8. Ask the 'cyber victim' to share with the other children how it made them feel to read each comment. Prompt the 'cyber victim' by asking the following questions -

"Did you notice a difference in how you felt when reading the first comment from the second and the second from the last?"

"Do you think you can guess who wrote the comments?"

"Would you feel better knowing who wrote the comments and why?"

"Did you believe what the comments said?"

9. End the exercise by reassuring the child who volunteered to be the cyber victim that the comments are not true. Make a point about how one comment can be taken as a joke, but receiving the same comment again and again can lead to cyberbullying, especially if they get worse and make the receiver feel really upset. Therefore, the children should be careful about how they phrase what they say to others so that the comment appears positive, good, helpful and not rude.

EVALUATION

Provide the children with a few negative comments and ask them to say how they would phrase them in a positive, good or helpful way.

For example, "You smell" or "Would you like some of my perfume?"

NOTES

You can read the comments from the first activity aloud, but only if the children struggle to read. Showing them the comments rather than reading them aloud mirrors cyberbullying more closely. The way comments are read aloud may have some effect on the child's response.

Do not worry if you do not have time to complete both activities. You can choose the one you feel will be most beneficial.