



Personal Injury

Are your children being cyberbullied?



By [Jasmine Daya](#)

Childhood bullying is not a new phenomenon but cyberbullying, which is far worse, is relatively new. Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour.

"Cyberbullying" takes it a step further. According to the R.C.M.P. website, "Cyberbullying involves the use of communication technologies such as the internet, social networking sites, websites, email, text messaging and instant messaging to repeatedly intimidate or harass others."

Cyberbullying includes^[1]:

- Sending mean or threatening emails or text/instant messages.
- Posting embarrassing photos of someone online.
- Creating a website to make fun of others.
- Pretending to be someone by using their name.
- Tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and sending it to others.

If a child was bullied at school, they could come home and feel safe. Unfortunately, with cyberbullying, you cannot escape and thus it can be deeply traumatizing to individuals and in particular to children.

Cyberbullying is a new area in the civil litigation context. I have successfully represented individuals that have been cyberbullied where there has been egregious harm done, such as psychological issues that have ensued or where sexually explicit content has been shared without consent.

Cyberbullying at schools is a significant issue in Ontario today. School should be a place where children want to go to learn, grow and build friendships. It should not be a place of fear or a place where inappropriate behaviour is permitted. If minors are being cyberbullied, there could be liability on their parents and the school depending on the situation.

As the mother of three children, cyberbullying is a significant concern for me. I am constantly teaching my children about what is appropriate on social media and what is not but I cannot, of course, shield them from everything and these days, they seem more on top of what's out there than I am. I encourage parents to monitor their children without suffocating them and to stay engaged.

If you feel that your child is being cyberbullied, be sure to do the following:

1. Obtain the names of all individuals involved
2. Try to retain all the communications – texts, social media etc. Sometimes this can be tricky with certain apps where conversations erase but taking a picture from another device or the screen with the message or taking a screenshot are both possibilities.
3. Chronical the occurrences so that information is not forgotten
4. If the cyberbullying is occurring at school, report the situation to the school
5. If the cyberbullying is causing significant harm or potential harm to anyone, report the situation to the police
6. If you are concerned about the wellbeing of your child from a health perspective, seek the advice of a doctor.

[1] Online: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cycp-cpcj/bull-inti/index-eng.htm>

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