

# #thebrief

## Cyberbullying

There's been a lot of media focus on cyberbullying, with websites such as Ask.fm, Instagram, and Facebook coming under fire for the behaviour of certain users. Cyberbullying is a significant problem; in 2013 anti-bullying charity Ditch the Label found that 70% of young people have experienced cyberbullying. But does the world of status updates and tweets have to be the minefield it's made out to be? Not necessarily - in light of the dangers of cyber-bullying, most social media websites have improved the help available for users. The following issue of #thebrief focuses on ways in which users can be protected when using social media websites.

Safer than it seems?

Version 14.08



**Facebook's** "bullying prevention hub" provides advice for teens, parents, and teachers, with practical suggestions on how Facebook can help you stop bullying.

**See something you don't like? Here's what you can do:**

Clicking "This post is a problem" reports harmful material – this can be anything from a picture that you don't like to images you think might be illegal. If the post violates Facebook policy, it will be removed, and the offending user may lose the ability to share content, use certain features, or if necessary may even be referred to the police.

Even if content doesn't violate Facebook's terms of use there are systems to help resolve problems, including the Social Reporting Tool that allows people to ask other users or friends to help resolve the conflict. Of course, users still have the ability to unfriend or block others to completely remove themselves from the situation.

**Did you know:** The Support Dashboard allows users to keep track of what Facebook's doing with any content they might have reported.

**More information at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/bullying>

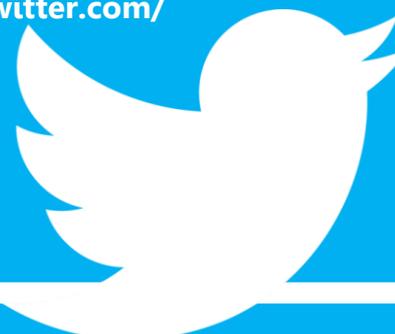
If someone on **Twitter** is causing you trouble, the Safety & Security section of the Twitter Help Centre provides some useful tips:

Firstly, Twitter recommends unfollowing and then blocking any users who are behaving badly. Blocking will prevent that person from following you or seeing your profile picture in their timeline; additionally, their replies won't show in your mentions tab (these Tweets may still show up in search).

If abuse continues, Twitter has a system by which users can be reported, and any problems dealt with. It also hosts links to anti-cyberbullying charities and help resources on its websites.

**Twitter's help centre:**

<https://support.twitter.com/>



**Ask.fm** has made significant moves to prevent cyberbullying after a number of high-profile cases. The terms of use for ask.fm explicitly state that bullying, being rude or mean, and similar negative actions are prohibited. These rules are supported by a number of new measures to keep people safe:

- Hire more staff to moderate comments on the site
- Introduce a "report bullying/harassment" button
- View all reports of bad behaviour within 24 hours
- Make the function to opt out of anonymous questions more visible
- Require an email address upon sign-up, so cyberbullies can be blocked
- Limit the features anonymous users are able to access



A range of websites (such as Gmail, Yahoo Groups, and Reddit) make use of **comment threads**. Comment threads group messages by topic, with replies to the original post listed below in order of time of posting. It's not uncommon for debates on comment threads to get out of hand and turn into full blown arguments; however these websites can also do a lot of good. One teenage girl posted a plea for help on Reddit after being bullied, and received numerous replies offering legal and emotional support. Reddit users encouraged the girl's school to take action, and the bully was suspended.

**CEOP/Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** works with child protection partners across the globe to prevent threats to children both online and offline. The site provides information on internet safety, with fact sheets on topics such as webcam use, publications about the problem of child exploitation, and advice. They also provide a reporting system, with which users can contact CEOP if they're aware of illegal or inappropriate behaviour. Reports are sent to a team of specialist police officers and investigators, who examine the situation and send a reply.

**Thinkuknow** provides information for young people and their carers on internet safety. With information, videos, and games targeted at a range of ages, it is an engaging resource that you might find useful when talking to young people about internet safety.

**Troll** - a person who purposefully intends to seek a specific reaction from the recipient and inflame a situation. People may use this to initially cause amusement but it can often start arguments that can be taken too far. An extreme example of trolling was exhibited following the tragic death of actor Robin Williams; his daughter Zelda was forced from twitter following a stream of abuse from various sources. This included one individual sending a photoshopped image of her recently deceased father. It should be noted that if the sender resided within the UK, this would have been classified as harassment, an arrestable offence.