



# *Kiusaamisesta terveeseen nettikäytökseen -projekti / Suomen Lions-liitto ry*



## **From Cyberbullying to Good Online Behavior – Guidelines to parents**

Suomen Lions-liitto ry (The Association of the Finnish Lions Clubs) has a project called KiTeNet (Kiusaamisesta terveeseen nettikäytökseen - From Cyberbullying to Good Online Behavior) which aims to create guidelines and supportive material for good online behavior among children and youngsters. The project has published a guidebook for parents, and this is a short version of the guidebook. The original guidebook is available on the web page of the KiTeNet project: <https://lions/kitenet>

The KiTeNet project aims to give expert information and advice to parents who wish to learn how to prevent cyberbullying by or against their children. It is also important for the children to learn how to recognize online criminal behavior, hate speech and misinformation. The project seeks to help parents to become good media educators and to take good care of their children.

*Over 90 % of over 10-year-olds uses the internet.* Children use the internet more than anything else to communicate with each other. The second most important reason is to search information and to learn new things. It is vital for the children to know how to control the internet as they spend a significant amount of time online.

*The internet can, however, also be a place for bullying.* According to a survey by the Finnish child welfare organization MLL (Mannerheimin Lastensuojeluliitto), 39 % of children have come across nasty comments, naming, or slander on the internet. The survey also showed that 50-65 % of families were concerned about the ways their children use the internet. Now, parents are especially concerned about the increased war stories online. It is important that parents teach their children the right ways to use the internet and give a good example of doing so themselves.

If children or youngsters have good media skills, they can decide which pages are safe to surf and which ones are harmful. Good skills help them to protect themselves. Safe internet pages are available, for example at <https://www.netari.fi>

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying includes online slandering, naming, humiliation, threatening or unauthorized spreading of information and photos. Cyberbullying is never caused by the victim. It is surveyed that 50 % of young people are cyberbullied and that 80 % have witnessed cyberbullying of others.

Cyberbullying becomes less common when children or youngsters

- know how to protect themselves online
- know how to be responsible and respect others online
- know how to be empathic with others
- want to help others

A child cannot judge oneself if there is a real threat or danger online. It is the responsibility of an adult to be aware of the child's behavior on the internet and to stop cyberbullying. You, as a parent, should not blame your child. Instead listen, discuss, and support. It is possible to overcome cyberbullying.



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## **How to use the internet safely**

What makes the internet unsafe? Advise your child that it is not acceptable to give away passwords, not even to a close friend. Your child should not give personal details to strangers online. The child is not obliged to answer uncomfortable questions presented to them online.

Advise your child not to send any photos to strangers and that it is not acceptable to send any disrespecting messages to others. Support your child if any nasty or frightening messages or photos are received.

There are many ways to stop cyberbullying: you can block the unwanted messages; you can ask the bully to stop; you can tell a friend or an adult or the admin of the web page about the bullying. It is estimated that every fifth person who has been bullied did nothing to stop the harassment.

## **What else can you do to support your child's wellbeing?**

Supervise that your child's daily activities are versatile and balanced, and that your child uses the internet in a sensible way. Your child needs sleep, exercise, and food to keep healthy, and attention from parents is important too.

Do not be afraid to restrict the time your child spends using computer, tv and other media devices. There are applications that can help you. Check out for example [families.google.com>familylink](https://families.google.com/familylink) ja [support.apple.com>settings>screentime](https://support.apple.com/settings/screentime)

Supervise that your child uses only web pages, films, programs, or games that are age appropriate. Also be aware if they include chat or other communicative features. Ask for help, talk with other parents, and set out common rules. Your child needs clear boundaries for healthy development.

## **What is against the Finnish law?**

The following acts are considered as crimes in Finland.

Defamation (also called slander or libel) means that you tell information about a person without permission, or that you send photos that cause damage and misery to another person.

Identity theft means that someone steals your personal identifying information and acts as you.

Unlawful threat means that you threaten someone's health or life.

It is unlawful to give away a photo that portray nudity or a scantily dressed person. It is also unlawful to give away material that includes violent acts or to possess a photo with a naked child.

Over 40 % of girls have witnessed sexual harassment during the past year. Advise your child to tell about the harassment to an adult, or to take a snapshot of the received message. Tell your child not to answer any uncomfortable messages. If you suspect a crime, report it to the police. You can contact the police in Finland online: [poliisi.fi/nettivinkki](https://poliisi.fi/nettivinkki)



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### **The pros and cons of the internet**

A good day for your child includes all kinds of activities, not using too much media. Social media cannot substitute social contacts in real life. Using media platforms in the evening can weaken the quality of sleep. It is good to have moments during the day when your child does nothing. If all spare time is spent by gaming, it is possible that your child cannot notice how the time passes on. It is a parent's responsibility to restrict the use of media suitable for the child.

Your child's self-esteem is strengthened by positive messages, for example by likes and hearts on social media or by praising messages. Negative messages or bullying can make your child feel afraid or upset. If this happens, listen to your child calmly and discuss the matter. Almost all young people (91 %) feel that it is important that adults take cyberbullying seriously.

What is gaming for your child? Is it a way to spend spare time, to relax or to forget worries? Talk with your child about gaming: what games does your child play, with whom, why and how? Make sure you know the age limits of the games. And play together with your child – make it a positive common experience.

*We wish you safe and comfortable moments online!*