

6 Things Victims of Online Gossip Should Never Do

Learn how your child should deal with online gossip



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When it comes to online gossip, everyone is fair game. Even if your children stay out of the drama at school, it doesn't guarantee that [bullies](#) or [mean girls](#) won't target them.

But if your child is targeted, be sure you print out copies of the online gossip, especially if it constitutes [cyberbullying](#). You will want to share these details with your child's school counselor or principal. Most of the time when gossip is spread online, it will filter into the school during the school day.

As a result, make the school aware of the torment your child is dealing with.

Additionally, some states have laws that allow schools to intervene and discipline students for making mean and false statements online. Next, make sure you give your child some ideas on [how to respond to cyberbullying incidents](#). And lastly, be sure to talk to your child about the things she shouldn't do when it comes to online gossip. Here are six things your child should never do when faced with online gossip.

Don't respond. Be sure your child knows that the best way to respond to a cyberbully is to ignore the posts, comments, texts and calls. Although it is hard to refrain from responding to something untrue, it is better for your child in the long run to ignore the comments. Instead, encourage your child to report the incident to a parent or trusted adult instead. Stress to your children that no matter how much the words hurt them, they should not respond.

Responding to gossip online keeps the rumor mill running. The idea is to let it die out.

Don't dwell on what you read. Let your child know that continuing to think about what others are saying is not healthy. It steals her time and her energy. Dwelling on online gossip will only make your child feel worse.

Instead, try to help her focus on other things. Plan outside activities, a small shopping trip or a fun weekend away to take her mind off the gossip and redirect her attention.

Don't read anymore of the online gossip. Once your child knows that people are gossiping about her, she needs to be sure to stop reading the posts. Although it is natural to be curious about what others are saying, it is not always healthy to read their comments. Instead, encourage your child to ignore the gossip and focus on other things like sports or schoolwork.

Don't seek revenge. Many kids want to get revenge on those who are spreading online gossip. But this is not a healthy response for your child. In fact, responding to online gossip in any way is rewarding the bully's efforts. As long as a bully is getting a response or a reaction from your child, her efforts to hurt your child are working. Encourage your child not to seek revenge but to hold her head high and move on. Most likely, outsiders will notice this dignified response and lose interest in the gossip.

Don't forget to cut off communication. Sometimes the best response to online gossip is to close out your child's social media accounts and create new ones. It's also a good idea to block the cyberbully from your child's new social networking sites, email accounts and cell phones.

Don't post things that can lead to gossip. When things have calmed down, talk to your child about she has learned from this experience. Also, encourage her to think carefully about everything she posts. Sometimes kids will look at what your child's posts and build online gossip using her own words and photos against her. Also, stress to your kids that they need to be mindful of what they tell others including what they put online, in text messages and in emails. Almost anything can be used to create [rumors and gossip](#) about them. And, make sure they know that the more private information they make public, the more ammunition others will have.

Don't lose hope. Cyberbullying, mean girl behavior and rumors can feel devastating to a child. Be sure your child knows that while this situation is painful, it will not last forever. Help her find ways to stay focused on the future and her goals so that this situation does not define her or cause her to doubt her abilities or her worth. Find ways to build her [self-esteem](#) and [instill resiliency](#). Online gossip can be a tough thing to deal with, but with your help, she will get through it.