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## Cyberbullying Is on the Rise Among Teenagers, National Survey Finds

By Héctor Alejandro Arzate on July 15, 2019 5:30 PM

### CORRECTED

While smartphones, tablets, and other digital tools have transformed how schools teach, they've also changed the way students interact with one another. And with those changes, have come increased reports of cyberbullying, according to the new report by the National Center for Education Statistics.

The nationwide report, "[Student Reports of Bullying: Results from the 2017 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey](#)," found that 20 percent of surveyed students ages 12-18 reported being bullied during the 2016-2017 school year. Among those students, 15 percent were bullied online or through text messages. The results marked a 3.5 percent increase in cyberbullying from the 2014-2015 school year, according to the NCES.

Data on cyberbullying was collected separately from in person bullying up until 2015. But researchers feel that the shifting landscape requires both uniformity and awareness in measuring bullying in all its forms.

"It is important to collect information on the location of bullying so there is awareness of where students are experiencing these behaviors," said Rachel Hansen, the project officer for the NCES. "While developing the uniform definition of bullying, it was determined that cyberbullying is a form of bullying and shouldn't be collected as a separate concept."

The survey does not currently collect specific information on the forms of technology or social media platforms that bullies are using most often, focusing instead on the behaviors of respondents.

### Differences in Bullying

The study found notable differences in cyberbullying rates among different student groups. In the 2016-2017 school year, 21 percent of female students report being bullied online or through texts—a rate that is three times higher than that for male students, at 7 percent.

The report also found that the students reporting being bullied online or by text also reported being bullied in several ways at higher percentages than students who were bullied in person. The nature of cyberbullying included actions similar to traditional bullying. One type of action included being made fun of, name calling, or insults, which were experienced by 74 percent of those who were bullied online compared to 63 percent of those bullied in person.

More prevalent, however, was the use of rumors. According to the 2017 School Crime Supplement, 90 percent of students who were cyberbullied reported having rumors spread about them, compared to 62 percent of those who had been bullied only in person. The report also found exclusion to be a key type of bullying, with 39 percent of those bullied online being purposefully excluded from activities compared to 23 percent of those bullied in person.

Dating to 2001, the report provides a long-running barometer on the fast-changing face of bullying, which affects students no matter where they plug in.

"We recognize the need to continue to collect relevant information that is informative for policymakers, researchers, schools, and communities," said Hansen. "The continued increase in use and accessibility of technology may result in modifications to the School Crime Supplement to address the emerging trends or high profile topics, such as online bullying."

**CORRECTION:** A previous version of this story misstated the percent increase in cyberbullying between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years. It is 3.5 percent.

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