

How to deal with the issue of cyberbullying in Ireland.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that takes place electronically over devices such as computers, tablets and mobile phones. It usually occurs on social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat or any platform where communication is possible. This action usually involves sending messages or posting negative or harmful information about someone else. Cyberbullying usually is increasingly common among teenagers. It usually occurs to those who are between the ages of 12 and 17, thus making it the most targetable age for being a victim of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is like any other form of bullying, it causes emotional, physical and even psychological stress to the victim. This usually results in the cyberbullied victims being strongly prone and experiencing intense anxiety and even depression. This takes a toll on the victim's mental well being as they might even start to experience mental health issues and even start to struggle academically.

Awareness of cyberbullying around the world has drastically increased, especially in Ireland due to the high profile case of Donegal schoolgirl Erin Gallagher who took her life in 2012 at the age of 13. High profile cases such as these have led to laws developing around the world in regards to bullying. In Ireland "Coco's law" was developed and named after a young Irish girl called Nicole Fox who took her life after experiencing extreme bullying and abuse online for many years.

Our plan to combat the increasing rate of cyberbullying is to make social media strictly for adults (over 18's) since the social media platforms are gaining such a mass following, that is constantly increasing, making it an extremely habitable place for toxic behaviour. Our idea of how we can achieve this is by making it a requirement to provide proof of identity when creating a social media account. This will ensure that users on social media will be 18+ thus avoiding most instances of cyberbullying.

We realise that this is a stretch as it would require the cooperation of the creators of the social media platforms to implement such a feature, however, nowadays social media has such a massive impact on the development and environment of the young populace, we believe that it should be categorised as a top priority to tackle the major issue of cyberbullying.