



Cyberbullying Pulse Survey

Key Findings

U.S. children experience the most extreme forms of cyberbullying at some of the highest rates in the world.

- 71% of children in the U.S. report having experienced cyberbullying (compared to the global average of 63%).
- American children report a high rate of severe forms of cyberbullying including physical threats (20%), personal attacks (20%), and sexual harassment (19%).
- 34% of parents said their children have faced racist cyberbullying attacks, a full six points higher than the global average of 28%.

Parents remain concerned about cyberbullying, yet are also unaware when it happens.

- 2 in 3 parents (67%) said that they are more concerned about their child being cyberbullied this year over last.
- Parents said they rely on three primary approaches to address cyberbullying with device monitoring at 64%, dialogue at 56%, and speaking to school officials at 40%.
- U.S. parents say they are more likely to support their children with the assistance of a therapist, at 29% versus the global average of 17%—nearly twice the rate—making it among the top responses to cyberbullying.
- Nearly 1 in 3 parents in the U.S. (32%) reported that they discovered an act of cyberbullying that their child hid from them. Compared to a global average of 27%, this indicates a distinct gulf between U.S. children and their parents when it comes to talking about cyberbullying.

“Despite having some of the most engaged parents, children in the U.S. experience among the highest rates of cyberbullying in its most extreme forms, such as sexual harassment, compromised privacy, and personal attacks.”

—Gagan Singh, Chief Product Officer, McAfee

Older boys in the U.S. are more likely victims—and attackers.

- More than 1 in 4 (28%) boys aged 17-18 say they’ve received threats of physical harm, more than twice the worldwide rate of 13%.
- Boys 17-18 report being exposed to high rates of personal attacks (26%) and outing of their sexuality (17%), at roughly double the rate of other children worldwide.
- Older boys in the U.S. also admit to being the perpetrators themselves, with 4 in 10 saying that they committed at least one act of cyberbullying. These include:
 - Making jokes at someone else’s expense – 32% in the U.S., 22% worldwide
 - Deliberately excluding someone from a discussion or chat – 26% in the U.S., 14% worldwide
 - Shared private or secret information about someone – 18% in the U.S., 7% worldwide

Parents grossly underestimate social media as a threat.

- Social media stands as the greatest cyberbullying threat to U.S. children, with 42% of them saying they found themselves a victim on a social media platform. However, only 28% of parents said they were aware that their child was cyberbullied on social media.
- Children in the U.S. reported experiencing cyberbullying at significantly outsized rates on TikTok (41% versus 30% globally), Facebook (62% versus 52% globally), Facebook Messenger (32% versus 27% globally), and Snapchat (32%, versus 24% globally).
- Notably, only 25% of U.S. children reported cyberbullying on WhatsApp compared to the global average of 38%, the only instance where the U.S. trended at a lower rate than the rest of the world.

Survey methodology

- In July 2022 McAfee, LLC conducted a survey to more deeply understand the experiences connected families have had with cyberbullying— as individuals and as a family. This entailed a global survey of parents and children, with children answering alongside their parents.
- Parents and their children of ages 10 to 18 were surveyed together, with parents answering first and then bringing their children in to consent and answer.
- These findings represent connected families not collections of individuals.
- The research was conducted between June 15– July 5, 2022 by MSI-ACI via an online questionnaire to 11,687 parents and their children from 10 countries.



For the full global study, providing insights across all ten nations surveyed, download your copy of “Cyberbullying in Plain Sight” here:

