

# Mean Girls: Cyberbullying Blamed for Teen Suicides

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Parents in a western Massachusetts town are trying to understand the [horrific bullying](#) that apparently led a pretty 15-year-old to [kill herself](#) -- and they are furious.

"That could have easily been my daughter and I am angry," South Hadley, Mass., parent Dave Leonard told school officials at a crowded meeting this week.

"You have failed," parent Luke Gelinis added, as the audience applauded. "Until someone admits there's been failure here, complete failure, you have nowhere to go."

But who exactly failed [Phoebe Prince](#)? Friends say the Irish immigrant, who moved to South Hadley just last year, had been the recipient of [nasty online messages](#) and e-mails. She was found dead in her home two weeks ago.

"Someone told her to go hang herself, and I don't really know who that was," student Jessica Chapdelaine said. "But she was getting bullied by some people, because there were people talking about her and I guess she just didn't like being hated."

Prince's friend Sergio Loubriel said he'll miss "just being around her."

Phoebe Prince died in an apparent suicide, after incessant bullying by classmates at the 700-student high school.

"I didn't want to believe it," he said referring to her death.

Experts say Prince's story is not unique.

Internet safety expert and privacy lawyer [Parry Aftab](#) told "Good Morning America" today that this type of bullying amounts to torture for some kids.

"The schoolyard bullies beat you up and then go home," she said. "The cyberbullies beat you up at home, at grandma's house, wherever you're connected to technology."

Aftab said most of the cyberbullies are "mean girls" that target young teenagers through e-mail and social media sites. Signs that cyberbullying is happening can include a child's sudden hesitation to use the technology they had always been enthusiastic about like online gaming, Facebook or e-mail.

She said those being bullied in cyber space need to "stop, block and tell" -- stop reading the insulting messages, block them from your computer and tell someone.

Even in South Hadley, parents say Prince was not the only one being bullied.

"My son has been subjected to physical, emotional and verbal abuse, called an idiot, called a loser," parent Lisa Gustafson said.

Added Abby Peaker, "It was the most horrific thing I've had to watch my child go through, and see her spiral into a downward spiral and lose her spirit."

Police are still investigating Prince's death, which has renewed calls for an statewide anti-bullying law. Currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia have anti-bullying measures and 23 have statutes against cyberbullying. Massachusetts is not one of them.

Even in death, Prince was bullied. On a memorial page dedicated to the Massachusetts teen who had recently committed suicide, [Facebook members](#) left taunting comments that had to be removed.

"It's heart-wrenching," said South Hadley Police Chief David LaBrie. "She had only moved here last summer."

"We are looking at all factors," said LaBrie, who was assisting the Northwest District Attorney's office with an investigation into Prince's death.

LaBrie refused to discuss the details of Prince's suicide out of "respect for the family's privacy."

"It's tremendously emotionally draining on the family and the whole community right now," he told ABCNews.com. "It's such a sad thing."