

CYBERBULLYING GUIDE

Cyberbullying happens when one or more people use technology to repeatedly and deliberately harm, harass, intimidate or exclude others. Cyberbullying is unfair and one-sided.

PREVENTION

- A whole-school-community approach is best
- Talk with students and staff about what they are doing on-line and encourage good cyber-citizenship. Administrators, teachers and staff can be effective role models of respect and of the responsible use of technology.
- Remind everyone to T-H-I-N-K* before they post anything online:
Is their message True? Is it Helpful? Is it Important? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?
If a message could be considered untrue or hurtful, it should not be sent using technology. The student should use different words to communicate the idea or talk to their friend in person.
- Encourage students to talk with a trusted adult immediately if they or any of their friends are being cyberbullied. Make sure students know that if they are being cyber-bullied, you will not take away their computer or cell phone privileges, you only want to help them work through any problems they have.
- Encourage peer witnesses to assist in establishing a culture free of cyberbullying
- Discuss the consequences of cyberbullying with students and parents. Harassment and threats can become the basis for civil litigation and criminal action. Parents can be sued if their children violate certain civil statutes relating to invasion of privacy and defamation.



DEALING WITH CYBERBULLYING

First, be sure that the student understands cyberbullying. Has the child received bullying messages more than once? Are the messages deliberately intended to harm, harass, intimidate or exclude the child? Is the interaction unfair and one-sided?

1. If a student is experiencing cyberbullying, make sure that he/she knows that:
 - Bullying is wrong
 - It is not their fault
 - You are glad that they told you about the cyberbullying.
2. Notify the parents of the students involved and fully investigate the incident.
3. If harmful material has been posted online, save the evidence and work with parents to contact the website or service's administrator to have the material removed.
4. Make this a "teaching-moment." Use a restorative-justice approach to disciplining the offending student. School suspension has been found to be ineffective or counter-productive in these cases.
5. Be persistent. Check back with all parties involved to ensure that the cyberbullying has stopped.

RESOURCES

Nebraska Anti-Bullying Laws and Policies: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/nebraska.html>

What principals can do: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/30/36willard.h29.html>

Bullying and Suicide: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-suicide-translation-final-a.pdf?s_cid=fb_vv201508

For more information to help stop cyberbullying, refer to this site: <http://bitly.com/connectsafely>

Sources: Willard, N. E. (2010, June 30) What Principals Can Do About Cyberbullying. Education Week
Put an End to Cyberbullying, (2013) Canada: QuickSeries Publishing

* T.H.I.N.K. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mygirltalk.org/GirlTalkResources/THINK.aspx>



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