Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools

FACT SHEET

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Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety

Cyber bullying is using the internet, cell phones, video game systems, online social networks or other technology to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

Cyber bullying can be an extension of bullying that children are already receiving at school, and cyber bullying can be even more emotionally destructive.

Since cyber bullying can occur anywhere and at any time, kids who are cyber bullied often have no safe retreat from the bully, even while at home.

Cyber bullying can occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Many teens believe that their peers cyber bully because they think that it's a joke, not realizing the overwhelmingly negative impact that it might have on the victim.

Cyber bullying can escalate into actual violence if it is not properly handled.

Cyber Bullying Facts:

- 43% of teens have been victims of cyber bullying
- 29% of teens did nothing about the bullying
- 92% of teens knew their cyber bullies from school
- Nearly 30% of teens wanted to seek revenge on those who cyber bullied them
- Only 11% of teens talked to their parents about incidents of cyber bullying
- Girls are cyber bullied more than boys
- Cyber Bullying occurs most often through instant messaging, followed by chat rooms and e-mail

What Cyber Bullying Includes:

- Provoking text or email messages
- Insulting or demeaning messages posted to online social networks such as MySpace or Facebook
- Creating websites that make harassing comments about classmates
- Sending inappropriate images to other students via computer or phone
- Bullying through email, chat rooms or on a website

Although cyber bullying is widespread and increasingly prevalent, there are several things that parents, teachers and students can do to help reduce both the number of incidents and the impacts of cyber bullying.

Things that parents can do to help decrease the possibility of cyber bullying:

- Learn what teens are doing online and keep track of their online behavior
- Tell teens not to give out their personal information online
- Keep computers in a highly trafficked room of the house where online activities are difficult to hide
- Teach children about cyber bullying and let them know that engaging in cyber bullying is unacceptable

Parents and teachers can talk to children to combat cyber bullying:

- Tell teens not to respond to the cyber bullies
- Block or delete the cyber bully's messages without reading them
- Report bullying incidents to Internet Service Providers (ISP's) and website moderators
- Keep records of bullying incidents, including printouts
- If cyber bullying involves threats or harassment, call your local police
- Over 70% of teens said that being able to block cyber bullies was the most effective method of prevention
- Encourage your school to be proactive in enacting cyber bullying policies

Remember to speak openly to children about cyber bullying. Some children do not report cyber bullying to their parents because they fear that their internet privileges will be taken from them. A frank talk to children about the issues involving cyber bullying is the best way to be sure that children are safe in cyberspace.

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