Internet Safety & Cyberbullying Prevention

Parents: What Your Children Post On-Line Impacts Others

Office of the Education Ombudsman — OEO

Tips for Cyberbullying Safety & Prevention

Set Up Secure Social Media Accounts. Teach your children as soon as possible how to set up social media and e-mail accounts with maximum security and privacy controls. Ensure that they have done it before they start using those sites.

Teach Your Children the Meaning of Privacy. Don't share personal, family or confidential information in your postings. Some things are private and should be kept within the family or ourselves. Also respect the privacy of others, even if they are your best friends.

Be Respectful of Others. Do not post information about others without checking with that person first. Don't post offensive or threatening jokes or comments. Think before you post. Postings are forever. Teach your children not to post anything that they would not like other people to know or see posted on other websites, social media pages or blogs. Don't make comments that are not true about others.

Respect Copyright Laws. Teach your children what the copyright symbol © means and why some materials are copyrighted. They should understand to never copy and paste the work of others or plagiarize materials.

Watch for Warning Signs of Cyberbullying. Is your child upset or angry during or after Internet use or cell phone use? Is your child a target of traditional bullying at school? Does your child appear depressed or sad?

What to Do if Your Child is a Victim of Cyberbullying. When necessary, contact the Internet Service Provider, cell phone service, video or content provider to investigate the issue or remove the material. If the perpetrator is another student, share evidence with the school counselor or administrators.

Report Cyberbullying. Save the evidence. Print copies of messages and websites. Use the save feature on instant messages. Report the cyberbullying to the police or cyber crime unit in your area if the cyberbullying contains threats, intimidation or sexual exploitation.

Make Sure Your Child Feels (and is) Safe and Secure. Convey unconditional support. Parents must demonstrate to their children through words and actions that they both desire the same end result: that the cyberbullying stop.

Emotional Distress. If your child expresses emotional distress or thoughts of self-harm seek professional help immediately.

Help Your Child Understand that Harassing Others On-Line is not Acceptable: If your child engages in cyberbullying behaviors, have consequences that have an impact so the child understands the seriousness of the behavior and that the behavior should not be repeated.

Speak to Your Children as Soon as Possible about Cyberbullying.

Don't think this can't happen to them or wait until it does. Knowing in advance that this can happen, what it would look like, and what to do about it, can minimize the impact.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies such as mobile phone text messages, emails, phone calls, internet chat rooms, instant messaging and social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook.

Why is Cyberbullying a Problem?

Cyberbullying is a fast growing trend that experts believe is **more harmful** than typical schoolyard bullying because it can happen **24 hours a day** via the Internet or our mobile phones. Children can escape threats and abuse in the classroom only to find text messages and emails from the same tormentors when they arrive home.

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