Cyber-bullying Tips for Parents
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Prevention Tips from Students:
- Set age-appropriate guidelines for each type of technology (cell phone, Internet)
- Teach us how to deal with conflict
- Monitor our use of the Internet
- Supervision, not snoopervision
- Watch for warning signs
- Don't blame the victim *(Kowalski, Limber & Agatston, 2007)*

More Prevention Tips for Parents: *(*adapted from *www.RyanPatrickHalligan.org)*
- Youth see smart phones as a means of connecting to others via the internet, rather than as a device used to place phone calls. If you restrict access to computers and tablets, but not smartphones, you're not restricting your child's access to the internet.
- Do not remove computer access completely – this is kid's social world nowadays.
- Do not allow a computer in a child's bedroom. Keep it in a public area where you can see.
- Sit down at the computer and let them show you how they use the internet.
- Ask your children which sites and apps they commonly utilize:
    - Instant messaging services (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger)
    - Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google Plus, Pinterest)
    - Video Posting (YouTube,)
- Open up your own accounts where they have accounts.
- If your child is under 13, you have the option to have most accounts deleted.
- Have your child share with you all user account names and passwords. If this creates a trust issue, perhaps a good compromise is to have your child write down this information, placed in a sealed envelope, to be opened only in an emergency.
- Make certain your child never shares their passwords with anyone, even a friend. Explain the risk of someone impersonating them and ruining their reputation.
- Have your child show you their profiles/pages. Is there too much personal detail?
- Scrutinize their friend lists on these accounts. It is important to recognize the identity of each person. If they do not know the real name of an online friend, then consider that person a stranger. Ensure they delete and block that person.
- Ask your child if they have ever been ridiculed, intimidated and/or humiliated on the Internet (cyber bullied). Encourage them to come to you if this happens. Both of you should learn how to use the *print screen* option to save evidence if needed.
- Ask whether they have bullied anyone. It is important for them to appreciate how much emotional pain can be inflicted by unkind words or images, and that the reach of the Internet makes it far more destructive. Explain that what may seem to be harmless teasing can be devastating to the person being teased.
- Ensure they understand that the Internet is a public forum so anything can be shared with other people without their consent or knowledge. They should be very discreet in what they say and do online and be vigilant in protecting their reputations. Things said and done online can come back to bite them many years later, such as when they are seeking a job.
- Have a very pointed conversation about '*sexting'*, the risky practice of sending sexually explicit photos or messages which can easily be forwarded to others & risk damage to their reputation.
- Purchase monitoring/time control software to help enforce your family's Internet policies.
    - Search *'parental control software reviews'* to find the latest products, features, reviews.

Intervention Tips for Parents: *(*adapted from *www.cyberbullyhelp.com)*

- Save the evidence. Print copies of messages/websites. Use the *save* feature on instant messages.
- First Offense (if minor in nature) – ignore, delete or block the sender. Instant message programs, email and cell pones usually have blocking features.
- If a fake or offensive profile targeting your child is set up on a social media site, report it to the site. The link for reporting cyber bullying and fake profiles can be found under the help sections of many websites. Make sure to copy the link (website address) to the site for reporting purposes.
- Investigate your child's online presence. Set up an alert on Google, or search your child's name occasionally through a variety of search engines.
- If the perpetrator is another student, share evidence with the school counselor or principal. Check to see if any bullying may be occurring at school.
- If the perpetrator is known and cyber bullying is continuing or severe, contact the perpetrator's parents and share your evidence (if you are comfortable doing so). Ask that they ensure that the cyber bullying stops and any posted material be removed.
- If parent of perpetrator is unresponsive and behavior continues, parent of target may contact an attorney or send a certified letter outlining possible civil/legal options if the behavior does not stop or material is not removed.
- Report the cyber bullying to the police or cyber crime unit in your area if the cyber bullying contains threats, intimidation or sexual exploitation.
- If your child expresses emotional distress or thoughts of self-harm, seek help immediately.

Teach children to become a <u>courageous bystander</u>! *Encourage children to speak out against cyber bullying they witness and report it immediately:*
- Don't engage in or support mean material, gossip, or rumors posted online.
- Don't talk about it at school to perpetuate rumors, gossip.
- Support a classmate being targeted online by posting positive messages!
- If you know the person being targeted, invite him/her to spend time with you.
- Tell an adult at home and at school. Print the evidence to share with an adult.
- Confront the student who is cyber bullying if it is safe and make it clear that you think their behavior is wrong.
- Remember that we are not invisible online and anything we post can be traced back to us.
- Monitor your own online reputation.
- If a victim is upset or agitated or is threatening self-harm or suicide, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.

<u>Reporting</u> Abuse, Offensive Profiles, or Inappropriate Content:
Twitter: https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169998-reporting-abusive-behavior
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/help/263149623790594
YouTube: http://youtube.com/t/community_guidelines *(learn how to flag inappropriate videos)*
Snapchat: http://support.snapchat.com/
Instagram: http://help.instagram.com/165828726894770
MySpace: www.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=misc.faq&Category=3&Question=27

This information is adapted from the following websites:
www.cyberbullyhelp.com, www.stopcyberbullying.org. www.backoffbully.com, http://www.stopbullying.gov/, www.targetbully.com

Source: Erbacher, T. & Gilmartin, C. (2010, May). Bullying, cyber-bullying and teen suicide risk. In-service presentation to Interboro School District teachers and staff, Delaware County, PA.