

Cyberbullying: Tips for Administrators *Terri Erbacher, PhD*

No school or district wants to be in the paper for a cyberbullying occurring to one of their students. Below you will find a few suggestions to protect both our victims and our bullies.

- Ensure online filters are in place and develop policies regarding cyberbullying. As case law is only just beginning regarding this topic, staying on top of the new research will be integral in understanding a school's role as much cyberbullying occurs off of school grounds. Diamanduros et al. (2008) suggest that it should be clear that a policy is being implemented for the protection of the students and school staff, cyberbullying behavior is not allowed, and those who cyberbully will face consequences if the behavior causes a disturbance at school even if the incident occurred outside of school.
- Teach students to not be bystanders, encourage them to speak up on behalf of peers who are bullied as well as to seek help from an adult if they, or someone they know is being bullied. This can be done through the implementation bullying prevention programs.
- It is important that schools, as a centralized system in the community, actively help educate parents regarding cyberbullying, including the importance of monitoring their child's online interactions, how to report harassment online, looking for warning signs that their children are being cyberbullied (Kowalski et al., 2007), as well as setting parental controls on home computers and cell phones.
- It is important that we educate our students on how to protect themselves online, where to go for help, how to document bullying behavior, and keeping passwords safe.
- Educate all school staff, parents and students on the warning signs of suicide. Implementing an evidence-based screening program, such as Signs of Suicide (SOS) as recommended by the Best Practice Registry (SAMHSA, 2013) is one way to ensure awareness of potentially suicidal behavior.
- Train staff on steps to take with a potentially suicidal student. See chapter 6 the text for further detail on this.