

Cyberbullying: What Parents Should Know and Do

- Cyberbullying is harming, or attempting to harm someone or their reputation or friendships through the use of text messages, phone calls, blogs, chat rooms, emails, Twitter, Facebook, My Space, photos, or any other electronic means.
- **Cyberbullying Prevention**
- Encourage your child to report to you, and/or other trusted adults (teachers, counselors, Principals, officers) about cyberbullying issues. Make sure you're a "safe place" for them to report. Many children fear their parents will blame them and take web/phone privileges away. Let your child know you understand the hurt this has caused and assure him or her you'll assist in finding constructive ways to deal with it.
- Have rules and consequences concerning your own child cyberbullying and other computer/phone use issues. Even better, have them sign a "Internet and Computer Use" contract. Include: time of use, appropriate language, approved sites, etc.)
- Consider not allowing your child to keep profiles of him/herself on websites
- Know everyone on your child's buddy list
- Know your child's passwords
- Consider not allowing your child to use "code words", or slang in order to hide true communication
- Encourage your child to a) communicate using spoken words directly to another person b) not say anything he/she wouldn't say in person c) and remember that whatever you send can be around the world instantly. There's not taking it back!
- Get software to monitor phones and computers
- Work with your child's school by encouraging him or her to follow school rules regarding cyberbullying and other safety issues
- Set a good example
- **Cyberbullying Intervention**
- Have your child send a firm, non-threatening message asking for all communication to stop and let the student cyberbullying know you will be sending the information to law enforcement officials. Ex. Please stop sending me messages of any kind and please take down all information you have posted about me. All information you send me from now on will be passed on to the Police.
- Do not retaliate in any way.
- If the student cyberbullying is from your child's school, make a copy of the cyberbullying material and take it to the Assistant Principal.
- In a non threatening way, contact the parents of the student cyberbullying and ask for their assistance taking the information down and getting it to stop.
- If the cyberbullying continues, you can file a harassment case with the Police.
- If things escalate, consult an attorney