

## How to Respond to Cyberbullying if it has already happened

### Webpage Bullying

- Encourage your child to spend less time online, but consider carefully before banning the computer
- Look up and review the hosting site's policy. Send them a copy of the webpage and a copy of their own policy. Demand that they remove the page.
- If it's spilling over into school, notify the school immediately!
- Should you call a lawyer? First give others time to react before you consider legal action.

### Cellphone Cheating or Bullying?

- If you know the perpetrator, report it.
- Threats of violence should be reported to police.
- Keep the evidence.
- Have your child block screen-names.
- Consider banning the cellphone from school use. Your child may be upset, but in the long run s/he may feel better at school.
- Teach your child to cope with cellphone bullying. Remind them: don't delete evidence

## COPING WITH CELL PHONE BULLYING (CONTINUED)

### REMIND YOUR CHILDREN.....

- Never give out proprietary information (about yourself OR your friends)
- Limit your buddy list, and ask your friends not to forward your screenname to others
- NEVER RESPOND to abusive messages

### As with most things....

- Prevention is easier than reaction!
- *Just talking* about these issues will help your child a lot
- If you have further questions:

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## Cyberbullying: A Guide for Parents



- What is Cyberbullying?
- How can I prevent it from happening to my child?
- How can I address it, once it's happened?

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## What Is Cyberbullying?



Cyberbullying is repeated, electronic-based bullying via computers or cell phones. People can be bullied through webpages which are abusive or derogatory, or through threatening or upsetting

Instant Messages or Emails.

Cyberbullying is not the same thing as a predator who is seeking a victim online, but they are both threats which parents should take seriously. Cyberbullying is, however, much more common. Studies have found that more than half of teenagers have said or gotten “hurtful” online statements, many have also issued threats electronically, but fully 60% of these kids have not told an adult. Parents should never assume that because their children are not typical bullies that it is impossible for them to become involved in cyberbullying, either as a victim or as a bully. Cyberbullying is easy to “try once” or to engage in “as a joke.”

### Types of Cyberbullying

Two common types are abusive webpages and abusive Instant or Text Messages. IMs are especially common in schools that permit cellphones to be used during the school day. Social networking sites such as MySpace.Com, while their policies forbid abusive postings, often in fact have them.

## Prevention is worth a pound of cure: How to Avoid Cyberbullying Before Your Child Encounters It

### 1. Discuss Social Networking Sites

Does your child have a site? You can search for it if necessary. If your child is underage, remove their site. Talk to your kids about how something FUN can also be dangerous. Monitor their site regularly if necessary.

### 2. Review the facts about these sites with your child

- It's easy to fake an age or photo
- These entries are forbidden and/or illegal: abusive, pornographic, fraudulent. Report them immediately.
- Your page is NOT private. Anything posted online is totally public and whatever you write YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR.
- There may be consequences for what you post: school discipline, problems getting into jobs, colleges, etc.

**The internet is A WRITTEN RECORD. It is exactly the same as publishing an article in a newspaper. Your words can be forwarded, re-posted, blogged, listed anywhere, a million times over.**



Nothing you post online is “private” in any sense.

### 3. Review Cellphone rules with your child

- Know and enforce the cell phone rules in your child's school. Enforce your own rules.
- Educate your children about cell phone abuse before it happens. Bullying and cheating happen via cellphones, and these are NOT ok.
- Review how to react to abusive or scary messages—save and report them, but DO NOT respond.
- With your child, consider in advance what the consequences will be if rules are broken.
- Consider a “child friendly” phone—one that does not permit messaging or has pre-programmed buttons only. Several models are available.

### 4. Discuss values and general principles with your child regarding ALL electronic communications

- **Electronic communications COUNT.** Don't try to claim later that you were “only joking” or “didn't mean it”. If you can't say it aloud to someone's face, then you can't message or email it, either.



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