Guideline for

Cyber Bullying DBE

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CYBERBULLYING

Read this



An initiative of the Department of Basic Education

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If you're like most teenagers, you spend a lot of time on a cell phone or instant messenger chatting with friends and uploading photos, videos, and music to websites.

You may have online friends whom you've never met in person, with whom you play games and exchange messages. Teens' lives exist in a variety of places such as schools, and friends' houses. Now many teens also have lives on the Internet, and created a space for bullying to take place.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying, happens when teens use the Internet, cell phones, or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt, intimidate or embarrass another person. Cyberbullies use voice messages, e-mail, text messages, photo images, videos, websites or personal web pages to repeatedly harass, intimidate or embarrass another person or group of people.

Whether you've been a victim of cyberbullying, know someone who has been cyberbullied, or have even cyberbullied yourself, there are steps you and your friends can take to stop cyberbullying and stay cyber-safe.

What Learners need to know!

- Never give out any personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal websites.
- Protect passwords. Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
- If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
- Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know is a bully.
- Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your friends or classmates to see, even in email.
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if you have received the message.
- Help kids who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
- Always be as polite online as you are in person.
- Be aware that cyberspace is PUBLIC space, and online messages are permament

Since most cyberbullying takes place at home, it's important that parents know about cyberbullying and that they get involved in preventing it. Just like parents help their kids avoid inappropriate websites, they can protect them from cyberbullying.

How Are Teenagers Cyberbullied?

To be a victim of cyberbullying can be a painful experience and can happen in this way:

- Bullies pretend they are other people online to trick others;
- Spread lies and rumors about victims;
- Trick people into revealing personal information;
- Send or forward mean text messages; and
- Post pictures of victims without their consent

How Do Victims React?

Cyberbullying is a big deal, and can cause a variety of reactions in teens. The best way to react to cyber bullies is to try and prevent it by:

- Blocking communication with the cyberbully;
- Deleting messages without reading them;
- Talking to a friend about the bullying; and
- Reporting the problem to an adult, Internet service provider or website moderator.

Many children experience a variety of emotions when they are cyberbullied. They normally experience feelings of anger, hurt, embarrassment, tension or anxiety. These emotions can cause victims to react in ways such as:

- Seeking revenge on the bully;
- Avoiding friends and activities; and
- Cyberbullying back

Some teens feel threatened because they may not know who is cyberbullying them. Although cyberbullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found.

If you are cyberbullied or harassed and need help, save all communication from the cyberbully and talk to a parent, teacher, police officer, or other adult you trust.

What are the warning signs?

Possible warning signs parents can look to look out for that a child is being bullied.

- Your child has few, if any friends, with whom he/she spends time;
- Seems to be afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with his/her peers.
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school;
- Appears sad, moody, teary or depressed when he/she comes home from school;
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or other physical ailments;
- Comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books or other personal belongings;
- Has trouble with sleeping or has frequent bad dreams;
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem.

What Parents Can Do

Prevention

- Talk to your child about Internet and cell phone safety.
- Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house.
- Monitor the amount of time your child spends online.
- Set up email and chat accounts with your children. Make sure that you know their screen names and passwords, and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.
- Regularly go over their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know him or her.
- Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyberbullied. Emphasize that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason kids don't tell adults when they are cyberbullied.

Intervention

- Save the evidence
- Protect your child from further bullying by blocking offensive e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers.
- Change your child's phone number and e-mail address.
- Report cyberbullying incidences to school authorities.
- Report extremely harmful online speech to the police.
- Report incidences to Internet Service Providers, cell phone companies, etc.
- Consider cancelling services with providers who do not respond adequately to your concerns about safety or harassment.

What Learners can do to prevent cyberbullying?

You can:

- Refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages;
- Tell friends to stop cyberbullying;
- Block communication with cyberbullies;
- Report cyberbullying to a trusted adult;
- Speak to other learners, as well as teachers and school administrators, to develop rules against cyberbullying; and
- Raising awareness of the cyberbullying problem in your school and community by holding an assembly and creating fliers to give to younger children or parents.

Remember!

Though you can't see a cyberbully or the bully's victim, cyberbullying causes real problems. If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Delete cyberbullying. Don't write it. Don't forward it.

Staying Cyber-safe!

Remember that the Internet is accessed by millions of people all over the world, not just your friends and family. While many Internet users are friendly, some may want to hurt you. Below are some ways to stay cyber-safe:

- Never post or share your personal information online (this includes your full name, address, telephone number, school name, parents' names, or your friends' personal information.
- Never share your Internet passwords with anyone, except your parents.
- Never meet anyone face-to-face whom you only know online.
- Talk to your parents about what you do online.

What schools can do?

Prevention

- Set clear school guidelines for Internet use. Teach learners about ethical and legal standards for online activities.
- Update policies to include guidelines for Internet and cell phone use, and consequences for cyberbullying and online cruelty.
- Make reporting of cyberbullying and online hate incidents a requirement.
- Establish confidential reporting mechanism.
- Establish supervision and monitoring practices of learners internet use on school computers
- Educate learners on cyberbullying and discuss strategies for reacting to cyberbullying as target and as bystanders.
- Promote empathy, ethical decision making skills and respect amongst learners.
- Increase awareness of Internet Safety Strategies amongst learners and their families.

Intervention

- Take immediate action when cyberbullyig takes place.
- Save the e-mail or other evidence.
- Assess the nature and the extent of the problem.
- Determine appropriate consequences for the perpetration in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners.
- Report extremely harmful online speech, such as harassment, stalking or threats of violence, to the police. Remember your school is linked to a local police station where you can report such incidences.
- Discuss the incident and consequences with the perpetrator's families to establish consistent expectations at home and at school.



For More Information

Check out the following resources to learn more about preventing cyberbullying:

Becta e-Safety	http://www.becta.org.uk
Bloxx Web Filtering and Content	http://www.bloxx.com
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	http://www.ceop.police.uk/
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	http: www.thinkuknow.org
Classwatch	http://www.classwatch.co.uk
Forensic Software	http://www.forensicsoftware.co.uk
I am Learning	http://www.iamlearning.co.uk/home.php
Information Security Awareness Portal	http://www.securityportal.co.za
Internet Watch	http://www.iwf.org.uk
MXit Safety Guidelines for Learners and Parents	http://www.mxit.com

Call Centre: 0800 202 933

www.education.gov.za