

Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for Parents

Issue # 8

BULLYING IN THE WIRED WORLD

QUESTION: How much do kids use Internet or cell phones to be mean to one another?

ANSWER: A LOT!

In the "wired world", our young people have their own electronic world that is kept secret from their parents. Kids can bully others without anyone knowing who they are.



People say things online they would never say face-to-face because they feel far away from the person at the other end and can't see the hurt they've caused.

This means that home is no longer a safe place from mean kids. **But** this doesn't mean that it is ok, or that nothing can be done!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Most kids going "online" from home.
- Over half of young people use the Internet with little control from their parents.
- Only one out of four teens say they talk to their parents about what they do online.
- Almost half of Canadian children have e-mail accounts their parents do not know about.
- 95 percent of parents don't know the chat room "lingo" young people use. In fact, kids may use codes when chatting online to warn others that their parents are watching.

Here are some common codes or "emoticons" (sideways facial expressions made by symbols) kids use while talking on the Net:

ASLP	"age, sex, location, picture?"
LOL	"laughing out loud"
POS	"parent over shoulder"
P911	"parent alert"
(: - /	"very sad"
! - ("black eye"
: + ("punch in the nose"
% + {	"got beat up"
* -)	"shot to death"

Adapted from Bill Belsey's website www.cyberbullying.ca

There are many ways for young people to bully others online. They may:

- Send e-mails or instant messages with insults or threats to the other person.
- Spread mean comments or rumours through e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, web sites postings and online diaries that everyone can see. A "bash board" is a place where mean comments can be posted.
- Steal passwords and use a fake identity.
- Build their own web site to target certain students or teachers. They can create a "voting booth" to encourage others to vote for the "stupidest" or "ugliest" person in school.





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Warn your children.....

Not to reply to messages from people who bully online. This is exactly what the bully wants: to know your child is worried and upset. Don't give them that control.

Never to give out personal information, passwords, or P.I.N. numbers - this includes names of themselves, friends or family, their address, phone number and e-mail address. Don't share their picture or the name of their school or sports team. Never tell anyone their password except their parents.

Don't believe everything they see or read. Just because someone online says that they

are 15 years old doesn't mean they are telling the truth.

Not to send a message when they are angry. "Flaming" is a term used for emotional messages or **strongly worded** opinions. Warn your child that once this message has been sent it is very hard to undo the damage that such "flames" can do. Instead, advise them to wait to calm down and take time to think. This helps them to write a message that only has the facts.

To always use "Netiquette". Be polite to others online just as they would off-line. If someone treats them rudely or meanly, do not reply.

Resources Available

Web Sites for Kids

<http://www.dibdabdo.com> *

<http://www.netsmartz.org>

www.chatdanger.com

<http://www.wiredkids.org>

<http://yahooligans.yahoo.com> **

www.cyberwise.ca/epic/internet/incyb-cyb.nsf/en/Home

* Non-commercial search engine with child/teen safe adult-reviewed sites.

** Kids' version of Yahoo!, this commercial directory links to safe kids' sites.

From the Public Health Resource Centre... Call the Resource Centre at 519-883-2256 to borrow these kits:

- "Internet Awareness for Parents: A Practical Guide for Safeguarding Your Family" This booklet and DVD has practical tips on helping to keep your kids safe on the Internet.
- "Cyber Bullies" This guide and DVD deals with issues about bullying on the internet. This is appropriate for Gr. 7 and up

Web Sites for Parents

www.bewebaware.ca

www.protectyourkids.info

www.wiredkidz.org

www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/web_awareness/index.cfm

www.netsmartz.org

www.cyberbullying.ca

www.cyberwise.ca/epic/internet/incyb-cyb.nsf/en/Home



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying