

Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for Parents

Issue # 4

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of e-mails, cell phones, text messages, instant messaging, or web sites to upset or purposely harm someone. This includes gossiping, starting rumours, or sending threats. These messages are repeated over time by a person or a group.

Can I tell if it's going on?

- Not always, as computers may be in a child's room away from adults or the child may spend a lot of time on their cell phone.
- Cyber bullying is hidden from adults more than any other type of bullying.
- Young people may hide that they are being cyber bullied from their parents for fear of losing their internet or cell phone privileges. They often don't know who the cyber bully is.



How can you help your child?

Talk to your child about their "cyber-space" experiences. This includes letting them know:

- Not everything said online is true
- Messages shouldn't be sent when they're angry
- Not to open messages from a stranger
- Trust their "gut". Turn off the computer if they feel uncomfortable and tell an adult.
- Not to share personal information or post their picture on the Internet.



You should also consider:

- Limiting the amount of time your child spends online
- Encouraging your child to enjoy other activities with family and friends
- Having the computer in a supervised area (not in the child's bedroom)

If you suspect cyber bullying is going on, tell your child to:

- Not reply to worrisome messages
- Save the messages as this is your evidence
- Stay off the computer or cell phone for awhile. Help them resume face-to-face social contact with supportive kids as soon as possible to regain their confidence.

You should then:

- Inform the internet, instant messaging or cell phone provider
- Contact the police. There are Canadian laws that protect against harassment and discrimination

For more information...

"Internet Awareness for Parents" - a kit (booklet and DVD) available at the Public Health Resource Centre. Call (519) 883-2256 to book.

Websites to check out:

www.cyberbullying.ca
www.wiredkids.org
www.netsmartz.org
www.bewebaware.ca



DID YOU KNOW?

- 50 percent of kids say they are online most of the time.
- 25 percent say they have received messages saying hateful things.