

Keeping Your Child Safe Online

Keeping your children safe online isn't about technology, it's about common sense and communication.

- Don't talk to or accept anything from strangers. Online, everyone is a stranger. We need to teach our children how to talk to strangers safely, and keep them from talking to them outside of a monitored setting. You also must teach them that anyone can masquerade as anyone else online. Don't tell people personal things about yourself.
- Come straight home after school. Parents over the generations have always known that children can get into trouble when they wander around after school. Wandering aimlessly online isn't any different. Allowing your children to spend unlimited time online, surfing aimlessly, is asking for trouble. If they are just surfing randomly, set a time limit. You want them to come home after they're done, to human interaction and family activities (and homework).
- Don't provoke fights. Trying to provoke someone in cyberspace is called "flaming." It often violates the "terms of service" of your online service provider and will certainly get a reaction from other people online - *a bad one*, and you certainly don't want that. Flaming matches can be heated, long and extended battles, moving from a chat room or discussion group to e-mail quickly. If your child feels that someone is flaming them, they should tell you and the moderator in charge right away and get offline or surf another area. They shouldn't try to defend themselves or get involved in retaliation. It's a battle they can never win.

Resources on the Web

Cyberbully.org
<http://cyberbully.org>

Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
<http://csriu.org/>

Wired Safety
<http://wiredsafety.org>

Stop CyberBullying
<http://www.stopcyberbullying.com/>

Netsmartz
<http://www.netsmartz.org/>

iSafe Inc.
<http://www.isafe.org>

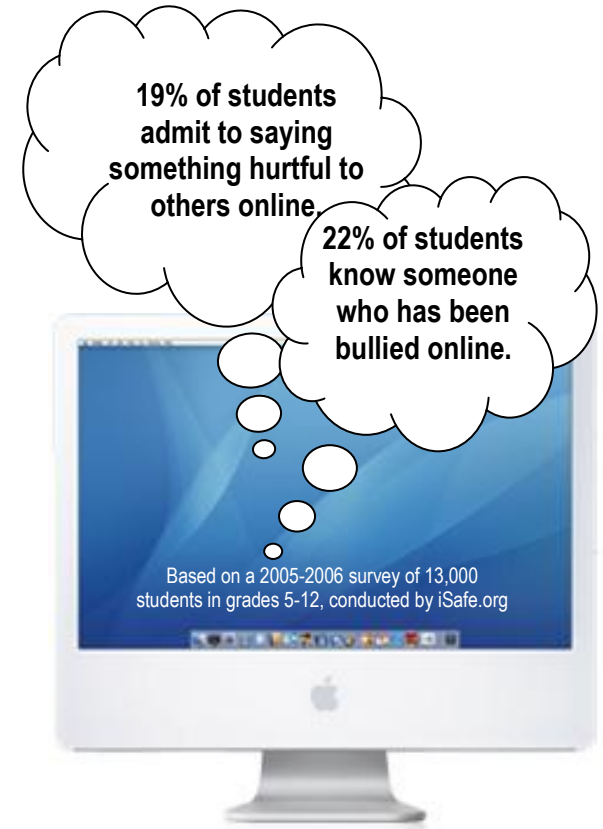
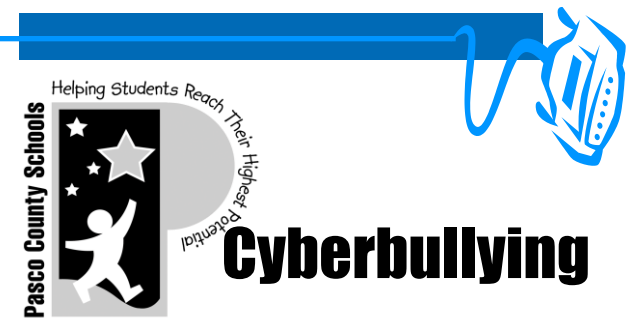
National Crime Prevention Council
<http://ncpc.org/media/cyberbullying.php>

For further information, contact the
Student Services Department
(813) 794-2362 (727) 774-2362
(352) 524-2362



District School Board of Pasco County
7227 Land O' Lakes Blvd.
Land O' Lakes, Florida 34638

Kurt S. Browning, Superintendent

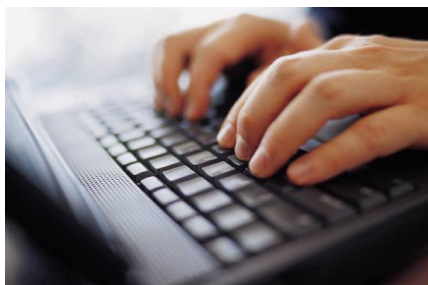


A Parent's Guide to Cyberbullying

What is Cyberbullying?

"Cyberbullying" is when a person is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Cyberbullies can be classmates, online acquaintances, and even anonymous users, but most often they do know their victims.



How are People Cyberbullied?

- Sending someone mean or threatening emails, instant messages, or text messages.
- Excluding someone from an instant messenger buddy list or blocking their email for no reason.
- Tricking someone into revealing personal or embarrassing information and sending it to others.
- Breaking into someone's email or instant message account to send cruel or untrue messages while posing as that person.
- Creating websites to make fun of another person such as a classmate or teacher.
- Using websites to rate peers as prettiest, ugliest, etc.

National Crime Prevention Council, 2007

Action Steps and Options to Respond to Cyberbullying

- Save the evidence.
- Identify the cyberbully(s). Ask your Internet Service Provider for help.
- Clearly tell the cyberbully to stop.
- Ignore the cyberbully by leaving the online environment and/or blocking communications.
- File a complaint with the Internet or cell phone company.
- Seek assistance from the school, if the cyberbully also attends the same school. (But because of free speech protections, if the cyberbullying is occurring totally off-campus, your school may only be able to provide informal assistance, not formal discipline.)
- Send the cyberbully's parents a certified letter that includes the evidence of cyberbullying. Demand that the actions stop and harmful material be removed.
- Contact an attorney to send a letter or file a lawsuit against the parents based on defamation, invasion of privacy, or intentional infliction of emotional distress.
- Call the police, if the cyberbullying involves threats of violence, coercion, intimidation based on hate or bias, and any form of sexual exploitation.
- If you see any online threats of school-related violence, call both the school and the police.
- If you see any material that raises concerns a child is emotionally distressed and may be contemplating suicide, self-harm, or other violence, contact the counselor of the school the child attends.

Nancy E. Willard, Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
Additional resources are available at <http://cyberbully.org>.
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Preventing Your Child from Becoming a Target of Cyberbullying

- Frequently discuss the concerns of public disclosure of intimate personal information and the value of modesty.
- Visit and discuss the values demonstrated by others in your child's favorite online communities.
- Work with the school to intervene effectively to address any in-school bullying.
- Seek to "bully-proof" your child by reinforcing your child's unique individual strengths and fostering healthy friendships with teens you can trust to be kind.
- Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house.
- 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.
- Reassure 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.

National Crime Prevention Council
http://www.ncpc.org/parents/Stop_Cyberbullying.php

Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
<http://cyberbully.org>