

Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention Tips for Families

Prevention



1. Bring the Topic “Out in the Open”

Initiate discussions about your child/teen’s online experiences. Establish a consistent, helpful presence when monitoring technology use that discourages the perception that adults are violating his/her privacy. If you choose to use filtering and monitoring software, don’t rely on it as a substitute for direct participation in your child’s online life.

2. Educate Youth about Responsible Online Behavior

Discuss with your child/teen the dangers of sharing personal information with others online and continually reinforce the importance of this guideline. Clarify the kinds of things that should never be shared, including names, addresses, phone numbers, school names, age and grade levels.

In addition, provide your child/teen with the necessary skills, tools and resources to assess the accuracy of Web site content. Spend time visiting Internet sites with him/her and provide supervised opportunities to practice these analytical skills online.

3. Discuss Response Strategies

Instruct your child/teen to immediately notify trusted adults and/or the appropriate authorities (parent or other adult family member, teacher or other school personnel, technology coordinator, librarian, etc.) when he/she encounter cyberbullying or hate-related behaviors online. Discuss and provide opportunities for your child/teen to practice strategies for responding to cyberbullying and online intolerance and hate. Even if your child is not being bullied, talk about what it means to be an ally to peers who may be the targets of cyberbullying. Distinguish between immediate strategies (logging out of chat room)

and long-term strategies (notifying the local Anti-Defamation League office or police department about information on a Web site).

4. Provide Structure

Restrict time your child/teen spends online, and provide guidance for structuring online time. Limit unstructured random surfing and consistently supervise your child’s/teen’s online activities.

5. Set an Example

Model safe use of the Internet, avoiding potentially dangerous situations, including online romance and gambling. Your child/teen is a keen observer of adult behavior and will do likewise, despite warnings to the contrary.

6. Encourage Personal Responsibility

Stress personal responsibility in your child/teen. He/she should understand his/her important role in creating respectful online communities. Knowledge and education are key weapons against cyberbullying and other forms of hate and intolerance.