

- ✓ Discuss the importance of treating others with kindness and respect when sending electronic messages, not just in person
- ✓ Encourage your child to come to you if someone says or does something on-line to make them feel uncomfortable

What to do if your Child is a Victim of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can have negative consequences, such as low self-esteem and school avoidance.

If your child tells you that he or she is being bullied on-line:

- ✓ Listen and provide support
- ✓ **Save the evidence:** phone and internet records can be traced
- ✓ Tell the bully to stop, if their identity is known
- ✓ Report the incident(s) to school administrators
- ✓ Notify the police

Cyberbullying Resources

The information contained in this pamphlet was adapted from the resources below. Ask for the books at your school or local library, and visit the websites for more information on cyberbullying and what you can do about it:

- ✓ *Cyberbullying and cyberthreats*. By Nancy E. Willard. Published by Research Press (2007).
- ✓ *Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age*. By R. Kowalski, S. Limber, and P. Agatston. Published by Wiley-Blackwell Press (2007).
- ✓ www.stopcyberbullying.org
- ✓ www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- ✓ www.cyberbullying.us

The WITS Programs resources are developed in an ongoing collaboration among the Rock Solid Foundation, Teachers from Greater Victoria School District 61, and Researchers from the University of Victoria's Centre for Youth and Society.

Cyberbullying

A Resource for Parents



Photo: Drew Jackson

This pamphlet was prepared by the WITS Programs. We aim to reduce bullying and peer victimization in all elementary school children. See www.rocksolid.bc.ca for more information

Cyberbullying is a type of bullying that takes place electronically, using the Internet or cell phones. It is important for children, parents, and school staff to be aware of cyberbullying as more and more children become immersed in the digital world.

This resource gives parents an understanding of what cyberbullying is, how to be proactive in preventing it, and how to help if your child is involved in cyberbullying – as a victim or as a user.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is an *illegal* activity. Children are not always aware of the consequences of their actions. Knowing what cyberbullying is and talking about the seriousness of it may prevent children from engaging in cyberbullying or from being victims or silent bystanders to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes the following negative or hurtful behaviours:

- ✓ Sending nasty or insulting electronic messages over the Internet or on cell phones

- ✓ Sending or posting gossip, secrets or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
- ✓ Pretending to be someone else and sending negative messages or posting material to get others in trouble or to hurt their reputation or friendships
- ✓ Purposely excluding someone from an Internet group, chat room, or friend list
- ✓ Posting real or digitally-altered photographs of someone on-line without their permission
- ✓ Using websites to rate peers' popularity or appearance

How is it Different from Other Forms of Bullying?

- ✓ Cyberbullying often looks anonymous. It does not occur face-to-face, so cyberbullies think their online identity is unknown – but *phone numbers and internet*



- addresses can be traced*
- ✓ It is often more harsh. Cyberbullies say things online that they wouldn't say in person
- ✓ It is far-reaching. Electronic messages can be easily sent to a school, community, or posted on a web-site for the whole world to see forever

What Can Parents do to Get Involved?

- ✓ Keep computers in a shared family space in your home – not in a child's bedroom
- ✓ Learn everything you can about what your children do on-line: Be familiar with any profiles (e.g., Facebook), web pages or electronic journals (blogs) they use
- ✓ Know your child's passwords
- ✓ Teach your children to never post on-line or send in a text message anything that they wouldn't want the entire world to see or read