



How Can Adults Learn About Cyberbullying, Prevention, and Policies to Enforce Safe Cyber Climates?

Things to Do:

- Learn Ten Ways for Parents to Prevent Cyberbullying through The Ophelia Project's Webinar Series. See www.opheliaproject.org for details.
- Watch the Ophelia Project's six part cyberbullying series on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/OpheliaProject>
- Subscribe to The Ophelia Project newsletter and read "Cyberbullying: Internet Hotspots" in each issue.
- Sign Internet and Cell Phone Usage Contracts with your child.
- Become familiar with the websites and programs your child is accessing including AIM, Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, Formspring. Facebook and Twitter both have YouTube channels with informational videos that can help you.
- Create a social networking profile and "friend" your child! If your child refuses to add you as a friend or follower, discuss this. Talk about limiting profile options for parents to view as a friend, but remind your child that you can view their whole profile with permission whenever you feel it is necessary.

Places to Call:

- The Ophelia Project
- Your child's school
- Local and state law enforcement agencies
- Local district attorney's office
- State attorney general's office

Online Resources:

- www.opheliaproject.org
- www.cyberbullying.us
- www.wiredsafety.org
- <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>
- <http://www.socialsafety.org/parents.html>
- www.bullypolice.org (lists bullying laws by US state)

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Role Play Suggestions and Conversation Starters

Sometimes it is hard to start a conversation with a child or teen. These conversation starters can help you provide your child with the skills and resources they need when confronted with cyberbullying. Try a conversation starter at the dinner table, before going to bed in the evening, or in the car. Practice a role play with your child – it may seem awkward at first but the more you practice a situation, the easier it will be for your child to talk about it and the easier it will be for you to figure out a solution!

1. What would you do if a friend forwarded you a story that you did not think was true?
2. You received a text message that said, "Afterschool tomorrow, get ready for a fight." What are you going to do?
3. Your girlfriend asked you to send her a picture of your pubic area. (Or, your boyfriend asked you to send him a picture of your breasts.) What should you do?
4. A person from your school created a Facebook group called, "Marching Band is for losers." You are captain of the marching band, and your picture is the one representing the group. What do you do?
5. What kinds of messages are ok to forward. What messages are not ok to forward?
6. Your best friend's Facebook wall is full of comments like "slut," "tramp," and "trash." What can you do?
7. You got into an argument with someone at school and sent them a nasty text message. How can you make this situation right?
8. You were on ChatRoulette and the person you are chatting with has asked for your home address, phone number, or wants to meet in person. How do you handle this situation?
9. Your teacher mentions that she visited your personal website advertising "Kick a Ginger Day" for later this week. She sends you to the principal and counselor, but you created this page at home. Do you think you can still get punished in school for it? (The answer is yes! When off-campus behaviors impact on-campus behaviors, the school has a right to get involved!)

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Sample Internet Usage Contract

As a responsible member of this family, I agree to abide by the following regulations when online:

1. I understand that computer usage is a privilege, not a right. My usage can be limited or revoked at any time for just cause. However, my parents acknowledge that my use of the computer is essential for developing skills necessary for school and adult life and they will not limit or revoke my usage unless absolutely necessary.
2. I will never provide any of the following information: address, phone number, or a location where I will be at a given time. I realize that providing any of this information can endanger my well being.
3. I will never agree to meet someone whom I have met online in person. Again, this can endanger my well being.
4. I will provide access to any online social networking profiles that I have to my parents who have the right to view, censor, and delete the content of this profile if they feel it is necessary. At the same time, my parents will respect my right to privacy and they will treat my online interactions in the same way they would a live or telephone conversation.
5. I will not delete the computer's history or cache unless I have expressed permission from my parents.
6. I will abide by the attached Guidelines for Internet Discussions.
7. I will not cyberbully. I will not use the computer to hurt, harm, or harass anyone. This includes people who I know as well as strangers.
8. If I am cyberbullied or a witness to cyberbullying I will take a screenshot of the cyberbullying, save it, and then immediately inform a trusted adult.

We all agree to the above statements and recognize the importance of this contract as a way to ensure safe and civil usage of the computer. The terms of this contract can be amended with agreement from all parties who sign below.

Child: _____

Adult: _____

Adult: _____

Date: _____

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Guidelines for Internet Discussions

As a participant on in an online discussion, I will abide by the following guidelines:

1. Although I am writing online, I will still obey the conventions of writing in the English language. I will use full sentences, proper spelling, and correct punctuation. The only exception to this rule is posting "tweets" where I may abbreviate and shorten words or phrases to remain in the 140 character limit.
2. I will avoid "netspeak" and emoticons, as I understand that these can lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings. They also violate guideline 1.
3. I will post my feelings truthfully while at the same time respecting the viewpoints of a global audience, even if these viewpoints run counter to mine.
4. If I agree with someone's post, I will not simply respond, "I agree" but explain my reasons for agreement or offer additional evidence that supports the previous post.
5. If I disagree with someone's post, I will not insult, slander, flame, or cyberbully the poster. I am, however, entitled to respectfully explain my reasons for disagreement.
6. I will not SPAM online discussions with material irrelevant to the discussion thread.
7. My avatar, signature, or profile will not contain photos of an inappropriate or provocative nature, nor will the photos depict illegal actions.
8. I will respect the privacy of others and use pseudonyms when sharing personal stories.
9. If I am ever in doubt as to whether or not to post something because it may violate these guidelines, I will not post the material in question.

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Sample Cell Phone Usage Contract

As a responsible member of this family, I agree to abide by the following regulations when online:

1. I understand that cell phone usage is a privilege, not a right. My usage can be limited or revoked at any time for just cause. However, my parents acknowledge that my use of the cell phone is at times essential for my safety and they will not limit or revoke my usage unless absolutely necessary.
2. I will not delete the phones call log, message log, or browser history unless I have expressed permission from my parents.
3. I will only provide my cell phone number to people who are approved by my parents. I will never give my number to strangers, write it online, or post it in a public place.
4. I will not cyberbully. I will not use the cell phone to hurt, harm, or harass anyone. This includes people who I know as well as strangers.
5. If I am cyberbullied or a witness to cyberbullying I will save the message or call log entry and immediately inform a trusted adult.

We all agree to the above statements and recognize the importance of this contract as a way to ensure safe and civil usage of the cell phone. The terms of this contract can be amended with agreement from all parties who sign below.

Child: _____

Adult: _____

Adult: _____

Date: _____

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Ten Ways for Parents to Prevent Cyberbullying

Prevention Tip Number 10

Limit the amount of time your child is online, uses his cell phone, and text messages his friends.

Prevention Tip Number 9

Install parental control software or online tracking programs to limit and /or monitor your child's web activities.

Prevention Tip Number 8

Know the warning signs!

The following behaviors may indicate that your child is a target of cyberbullying:

- Becomes reluctant to use computer / cell phone
- Closes or minimizes windows when someone else walks by
- Avoids discussion or disclosure regarding online activities
- Seems agitated or uncomfortable during or after computer usage
- Clears the cache / history after each use on the computer and call / text logs after use of cell phone
- Shows socio-emotional symptoms of aggression: anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts/behaviors, plans reactive aggression / revenge, increases risk behaviors, indifferent to interactions
- Shows somatic effects of aggression: headache, nausea, stomach ache, fatigue

The following behaviors may indicate that your child is a cyberbully:

- Shows increased use of technology, often during unsupervised times or late at night
- Closes or minimizes windows when someone else walks by
- Avoids discussion or disclosure regarding online activities
- Has multiple email addresses
- Has multiple accounts for social networking and communication sites / programs
- Clears the cache / history after each use on the computer and call / text logs after use of cell phone
- Laughs excessively when online
- Shows extreme anger when online privileges are removed
- Has exhibited bullying behaviors "in real life"

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Prevention Tip Number 7

Create a contract with your child about uses of her cell phone and computer. Add an anti-bullying clause.

Prevention Tip Number 6

Role play what to do if your child or one of his friends is being cyberbullied. Practicing telling an adult about it can make your child more comfortable if they have to do it for real.

Prevention Tip Number 5

Keep your child's computer in a place where you can easily observe his actions such as a family room, game room, or dining room. **Do not allow your child to be online in his bedroom with the door closed!**

Prevention Tip Number 4

Teach your children this rule: If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't write it and don't forward it!

Prevention Tip Number 3

Ask your child what she is doing online! Do not accept "nothing" or "none of your business" as an answer... It is your business to know what your child is doing and who she is talking to on the phone and online!

Prevention Tip Number 2

Talk to your children about bullying and aggression in all of its forms – physical, verbal, and relational. Let them know that they can trust you if they tell you that they are being bullied and also that you will not tolerate them bullying anyone else!

Prevention Tip Number 1

Do not ignore cyberbullying! **You wouldn't ignore it if it were right in front of you, would you?**

Cyberbullying is: The use of modern communication technologies (such as the Internet and cell phone) to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate individuals in an attempt to gain power and control over them. (Glen R. Stutzky)

93% of parents fell they have a good idea of what their kids say they do online.

41% of kids say we don't!

-- i-SAFE America (2005-2006)

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