Cyberbullying

What is it? How it works. And, how to stop it.

Friendships and relationships with peers are vital to a child's future success. Positive peer relationships help children build interpersonal, social, and leadership skills. Unfortunately, not all relationships among children and teens are positive. Despite more attention in recent years, bullying is still a problem for children and teens, and today's bullies have a new tool in their arsenal – cyberbullying.

What is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying occurs when a child is harassed, threatened, humiliated, or otherwise targeted by another child through interactive technology. These technologies include cell phones, the internet, instant messaging, and password and ID theft. Cyberbullying is worse than traditional bullying because it follows a child home and can occur any time, day or night.

What to do if Your Child is Being Cyberbullied

Parents need to provide their children with a safe place to go when things aren't going right in their lives – online and offline.

- Encourage your children to tell you about any message that is hurtful, embarrasses them, or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way.

- Be supportive of your child and let them know you love them.

- Tell them not to respond to the messages or retaliate.

- If the bully is a child at your child's school, meet with school officials and ask for their help resolving the issue.

- Report the bully to your internet service provider or cell phone company, and the website where the bullying is occurring.

- Block the bully from sending messages to your child. The website where the bullying is occurring or your cell phone provider can help you do this.

- Read the messages. If personal information has been posted about your child or threats have been made, notify local law enforcement officials immediately.

Preventing Cyberbullying

- Take a stand against cyberbullying and let your child know how you feel.

- Keep the computer in a common area of the house.

- Teach your children to be respectful of others, online and offline.

- Tell your child to consider other's feelings before forwarding a hurtful email or participating in activities that hurt others.

- Ask them to think before responding in anger to hurtful messages.

- Encourage them to tell a parent, teacher, or counselor if they know about another child who is being cyberbullied.

Useful Websites

http://stopcyberbullying.org/

http://www.ncpc.org/topics/cyberbullying

http://www.connectsafely.org/safety-tips-and-advice.html

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