



# School Social Worker's Spotlight

By DeKalb County School District's Social Workers

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## Tips for kids and teens dealing with Cyber bullying

1. It is very important not to respond to any messages or post written about you, no matter how hurtful or inaccurate.
2. It is very important not to seek revenge on a cyberbully by becoming a cyberbully yourself.

### Instead

1. Save all the evidence of the cyberbullying, and then report them to a trusted adult.
2. Report threats of harm and inappropriate sexual messages to the police.
3. Become relentless by reporting each and every incident until it stops.
4. Prevent communication from the cyberbully by blocking their email address, cell number, by deleting them from social media contacts, and report their activities to their internet provider or the website they use to target you.

## National Anti-CyberBullying Month



Parents, do you remember The Jetsons. The television show originally aired in primetime from 1962-1963, then later as part of the weekday/weekend morning programming until 1987. The Jetsons lived in the year 2062 in a futuristic utopia with elaborate robotic contraptions, aliens, holograms, and whimsical inventions. Technology has advanced drastically since the 1960's, 1980's and even the 1990's. What we watched on the Jetsons, when we were younger, we never imagined it would become our reality. We now have Skype, ooVoo, FaceTime, instant messages, text messages, chat rooms, Instagram, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr, Socialcam, and many many more that

we are unable to keep up with. With the improvements in technology, we are able to keep in touch with our family and friends across the world, have access to tons of information at the touch of a finger, and technology has been incorporated in our children's educational process. As we all know, with all positive and great inventions comes the downside. So as technology emerged to the forefront, we now have cyberbullying that our children may become a victim of, participate in, or is the cyberbully.

### What is Cyberbullying?

According to HELPGUIDE.com and About.com cyberbullying is when a child or teen uses the internet, emails, text messages, instant messages, social media websites, online forums, chat rooms, or other digital technology to harass, threaten, stalk, lie about, gossip and/or spread rumors, humiliate, and/or post private or doctored photos of another child or teen. Cyber bullies can torment their victims 24 hours a day and the bullying can follow the victim anywhere so that no place, not even home, ever feels safe. With a few clicks the humiliation can be witnessed by hundreds or even thousands of people on-line.

### Become pro-active and prevent cyberbullying before it starts

Teach your kids to:

- refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages
- tell their friends to stop cyberbullying
- block communication with cyberbullies; delete messages without reading them
- never post or share their personal information online or their friends' information
- never share their internet passwords with anyone, except you.
- talk to you about their life online



- never put anything online that they wouldn't want their classmates to see, even in email
- not to send messages when they are angry or upset
- always be as polite online as they are in person.

It is also important for parents to know that thirteen (13) is the minimum age for most social media sites. Thirteen (13) is the age set by Congress in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which prohibits web sites from collecting information on children younger than 13 years old without parental permission. The official terms of service for many popular sites now mirror the COPPA regulations and state that 13 years of age is the minimum age to sign up and have a profile. This is the minimum age to sign on to Facebook. However, there are some sites geared for children of younger ages that do not have such an age restriction.

*Information within this newsletter was taken from Wikipedia, HELPGUIDE.com, About.com and Pediatric Health Care Alliance, PA, and DCSD Code of Student Conduct Handbook*

## Parent's Guide to Internet Safety

Regardless of how much your child resents it, you can only protect your child by monitoring what he or she does online.

- Keep the computer in a busy area or common area in your house, so you can easily monitor its use rather than allowing your child use of a laptop or tablet in his or her bedroom.
- Limit data access to your child's smart phone if your child surfs the web. Some wireless providers allow you to turn off text messaging services during certain hours.
- Set guidelines: by creating a set of guidelines about when and how long your child can use the computer. Be clear about what they can and cannot do online. If they need to complete chores or homework first, outline that as well. Discuss things like instant messages, chat rooms, blogs, and social media sites. Work out a contract with your child about household expectations and have everyone sign it, and don't forget to come up with consequences for breaking rules.
- Set up filters on your child's computer. There is tracking software that can block inappropriate web content, and assist you with checking your child's online activities.
- Insist on knowing your child's password, and learn the common acronyms that kids are using online and in text messages.
- Know who your child is communicating with online. Go over and view your child's address book and buddy list with them, and ask who each person is and how your child knows them.
- Do a little investigative work by using your browser history, cache and cookies to find out what sites your child has been visiting. This is not to suggest that you should snoop on your child, but a spot check every so often is a good idea. Enter your child's name and nickname into search engines to see if they have a public profile on any of the social networking /media sites.
- Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if they receive threatening messages or are targeted by cyber bullies.

## DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S BOARD POLICY ON BULLYING CAN BE FOUND IN THE 2013-2014 CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT, STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

The District expressly prohibits the bullying, harassing, or intimidating of any student, by any means or method, at school, on school property, or at school-related functions; while traveling to or from school on a school bus; off-campus when the behavior results in a disruption to the school environment; or by use of data or software that is accessed through a District computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of the District. Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Cyberstalking or engaging in conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to the victim;
- Cyberbullying or the willful, hostile and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social networking websites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, etc.), chat rooms, texts, and instant messaging;
- The use of cameras or camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students or school employees and distributing them to others or posting them online;
- Sending abusive or threatening text messages or instant messages; and
- Using websites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students