Cyberbullying

SOCIAL NETWORK

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a fast-growing form of bullying that has emerged with the advent of technology. It involves sending offensive, humiliating or threatening messages or images through the computer or smart/cell phone. It is most often seen with middle- and high-school students, but students as young as eight or nine have also engaged in this high-tech form of bullying.

Cyberbullying may be engaged in by someone the victim knows or by a complete stranger. In some cases, cyberbullies have been victims of face-to-face bullying and are using the Internet to fight back in an arena where they feel comfortable. Cyberbullying can be done anytime, anywhere and by anyone with Internet access. It does not require the presence of its victim; it only requires access to a computer or smart/cell phone. Hiding behind a mask of anonymity, cyberbullies can thus invade a victim's home without ever entering the door and feel like they have little chance of being caught. And it can go on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Forms of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may take various forms, ranging from a cruel joke to a vicious threat. The most common form of cyberbullying is the posting of hurtful comments, rumors and/or pictures online.

Impact on Students

Victims of cyberbullying have experienced some of the same problems encountered by victims of face-to-face bullying, including humiliation, low self-esteem, anger and depression. These emotional problems may in turn give rise to other difficulties, including poor school performance, school avoidance, social withdrawal and antisocial acts. In some cases, severe and ongoing cyberbullying has led some victims to take their own lives.

Prevention Strategies

☐ Develop a cyberbullying policy – Code of conduct should be expanded to cover cyberbullying.

☐ Survey students and school staff about cyberbullying– Provides school officials useful information about the nature and frequency of cyberbullying.

☐ Educate staff about cyberbullying – Provide workshops on the topic.

☐ Discuss cyberbullying with students –

- Discuss appropriate and inappropriate use of technology in school and the school disciplinary approach to Cyberbullying.

- Talk about the pain of being cyberbullied.

- Advise students to seek help from adults if being cyberbullied.

- Encourage students who witness Cyberbullying to stop the incident, support the victim or inform an adult.

- Explain to students how their Internet and smart/cell phone communications leave "digital footprints" that may allow them to be identified.

☐ Present a formal cyberbullying curriculum – Will help raise awareness and its impact on others, provide students with skills to use technology in a responsible manner, and teach them how to deal with cyberbullying incidents.

☐ Use peer mentoring – Have older students talk with younger students about appropriate and inappropriate ways of using the Internet.

☐ Post information in school about cyberbullying – Post signs about Cyberbullying in the computer rooms, the library, hallways, classrooms, and the guidance office. Schools should also place a list of its rules for technology and the "acceptable use" policy next to school computers.

☐ Invite law enforcement officials to talk with students– Helps students appreciate the seriousness of cyberbullying.

☐ Educate parents – Enable parents to help their student to use the Internet in a safe and responsible manner.

Strategies for Dealing with Cyberbullying

- Establish and communicate clear rules to staff for handling cyberbullying.

- Keep a record of computer activity.

- Provide students with a confidential way of reporting cyberbullying.

- Respond to cyberbullying incidents quickly.

- Provide a range of disciplinary measures.

- Provide support to the victim.

Helpful Web Sites

www.stopcyberbullying.org
www.i-safe.org
www.cyberbullying.org
www.cyberbullying.us
www.stopbullyingnow.com
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

www.nonamecallingweek.org
www.nprinc.com/bully/vabp.htm
www.bullypolice.org
www.dontlaugh.org
www.42explore.com/bully.htm
www.bullying.org

MEA
Michigan Education Association