Cyber-Bullying: Suggestions for Parents

Cyber-bullying can range from rude comments to lies, impersonations, and threats, therefore your responses may depend on the nature and severity of the cyber-bullying.

Here are some actions that you may want to take after-the-fact.

► **Strongly encourage** your child not to respond to the cyber-bullying.

► **Do not erase** the messages or pictures. Save these as evidence.

► **Try to identify** the individual doing the cyber-bullying. Even if the cyber-bully is anonymous (e.g., is using a fake name or someone else’s identity) there may be a way to track them through your Internet Service Provider.

► If the cyber-bullying is coming through e-mail or a cell phone, it may be possible to block future contact from the cyber-bully.

► **Contact your school.** If the cyber-bullying is occurring through your school district’s Internet system, school administrators have an obligation to intervene. Even if the cyber-bullying is occurring off campus, make your school administrators aware of the problem. They may be able to help you resolve the cyber-bullying or watchful for face-to-face bullying.

► **Contact the police** if cyber-bullying involves acts such as:
  ► Threats of violence
  ► Extortion
  ► Obscene or harassing phone calls or text messages
  ► Harassment, stalking, or hate crimes
  ► Child pornography

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**Survey Says**

► 85% of 13-17 year olds have social media accounts. Parents fear “bullying” on these accounts...
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How to Prevent Cyber-bullying

► Discuss with your child openly what is appropriate and what is not appropriate to communicate online.
  ► Don’t give out private information (Passwords, PIN)
  ► Be careful about posting personal information such as name, address and cell numbers
  ► Don’t share buddy lists
  ► Delete messages from people you don’t know
  ► When something doesn’t sound right, leave the chat room
► Assume no digital communication is private
► Use privacy settings on social media sites
► Explain the problems of posting pictures online
► Teach how to identify a threatening communication

Surf Smart
► Explore the internet with skill and direction!

Share Less
► Keep your personal information private!

Think First
► Interact online appropriately!

Fact
► 90% of students who had been threatened online had never discussed that possibility with a parent

Remember… long-term effects of cyber-bullying include:
► Poor academic performance
► Anxiety and loss of interest in socializing
► Aggression or violence toward others
► Depression and suicidal thoughts

Resource: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

For More Information
Kentucky Center for School Safety

www.kysafeschools.org