



Power to Learn

DELETE CYBERBULLYING!

What Parents Need to Know about Cyberbullying

Who's the stupidest sophomore -
take the poll!

PUBLIC HUMILIATION

INTIMIDATION

It was supposed to be a joke.

Think
before
you send

Sexting

I didn't think he would send it to his friends

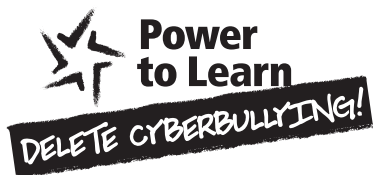


Power to Learn, Cablevision's commitment to education in our communities, empowers K-12 learning in the tri-state area by making technology in the classroom useful and by facilitating the home-school connection.

Power to Learn is pleased to partner with your child's school to provide exciting opportunities such as:

- ✓ Innovative curriculum opportunities at www.powertolearn.com
- ✓ Educational products and services including Cablevision's commitment to providing state-of-the-art:
 - **FREE** cable television
 - **FREE** Optimum Online
 - **FREE** Optimum Voice





Delete Cyberbullying is a year-long public service initiative sponsored by Cablevision's Power to Learn in partnership with regional Boys & Girls Clubs, Cartoon Network's Stop Bullying: Speak Up, and Common Sense Media.

Cyberbullying is an important and growing challenge facing young people today. Nevertheless, digital media is an integral part of their lives and affords opportunities for learning, support, self-expression, and creativity. Parents and educators can work with young people to ensure that the benefits of this technology are not overshadowed by the challenges and risks. This multi-faceted initiative seeks to assist parents and educators to do just that, while empowering children to combat bullying through education and information.

Delete Cyberbullying consists of:

- ✓ Free online and print resources for parents, educators and students that provide tips, advice and suggestions on how to deal with this pressing social issue in a variety of contexts.
- ✓ Regional "Town Hall" meetings at Boys & Girls Clubs in NYC, CT, NJ and Long Island at which parents and students will have the opportunity to speak to experts, address law enforcement and learn how to prevent and deal with this issue.
- ✓ Delete Cyberbullying pledge, available online and in participating B&G clubs, which encourages students throughout the NY Metropolitan area to publicly pledge to combat cyberbullying and speak up if they are witnesses to it.
- ✓ Free family resource guide, which answers common questions related to digital media and cyberbullying.
- ✓ Public service announcement campaign airing throughout Cablevision's service area and encouraging community members to combat cyberbullying in and out of school.
- ✓ Public service announcement and poster contest for regional students, grades 4-11, to create videos or posters with an anti-cyberbullying message. Learn more at www.powertolearn.com/delete-cyberbullying.
- ✓ Training events at schools and select community locations throughout the region.

Working together we can all Delete Cyberbullying!

Q /: What is a cyberbully?

A: Cyberbullies are bullies who operate online using electronic communication as a means of victimizing others. They are children whose actions range from teasing to harassment and threats. Most cyberbullies are classmates or children your children know, though others could be acquaintances or even strangers. Bullies, often anonymously, send mean and embarrassing texts and emails, create social networking pages designed to humiliate, post and send unattractive images and videos, and harass during online games and chats. Cyberbullying is different from face-to-face bullying in that cyberbullies are able to harass their target 24/7, the bullying is harder to control, is often done in a public forum and can be anonymous. Some children who would never be face-to-face bullies are empowered to bully others by the distance and anonymity that digital communication affords.



You need to set up rules for your children's use of digital communication, including what to do if they encounter a cyberbully and how to respect others online. See the *Cyberbullying* parent guide in the *Internet Smarts: Interactive Case Studies* section at www.powertolearn.com for more help. Also, you can visit Common Sense Media at www.commonsense.org to watch a video and see more tips about cyberbullying.

Q2: How do I know if my child is being cyberbullied and what can I do about it?

A: Children who are being cyberbullied often keep it to themselves out of embarrassment or worry about their parents' reaction. They may be afraid parents will take away their phone or Internet privileges, if they admit that a bully is targeting them or someone they know. Some may feel like they've somehow brought the bullying on themselves.



You may notice that they avoid digitally interacting with others and may stop using digital devices altogether. Alternatively, they may end up online even more than before, monitoring their screen and hiding it from their parents. They may seem sad or depressed. There may be problems with their studies and they may drop out of sports teams and other activities. Some show anger against other kids and talk about how they can get back at them. The problems may lead to withdrawal, illness, sleeplessness, and even thoughts about hurting themselves. Bottom line—be on the lookout for changes in your child's behavior. All children are different and will evidence different warning signs.

To combat cyberbullying, you've got to know if it's happening. From the time your children first begin going online, texting, social networking, etc. talk with them about their digital life. If you encourage and maintain an open dialogue, you'll be in a position to help your children should a cyberbully strike. Encourage your children to let you know if

anything online makes them feel uncomfortable and help them understand the difference between bullying and teasing among friends. Teasing that persists is bullying and must be dealt with. Depending upon the situation, you may want to talk with your children's teachers, counselors, Internet providers and/or the police. Additionally, don't delete the message since you may need it as evidence; and don't respond to the bully as this can escalate the matter.

Most of all, when your children are bullied, they need to know that they're not alone—that you're there and will help them get through what's happening. You may also want to encourage your child to talk to another trusted adult in their life about the situation.

Q 3: How do I know if my child is a cyberbully and what can I do about it?

A: It's difficult to spot cyberbullies because they may appear to be very well-adjusted, popular children. They may play a leadership role in "cool groups". Cyberbullies might be bright and manipulative and capable of getting others to work with them. They wouldn't consider themselves bullies; they might think they're just playing around or that their target deserves it.



Some cyberbullies don't fit this pattern because they become cyberbullies as a reaction to someone who is bullying them. Other cyberbullies are loners who use technology to humiliate simply because

they can or because they want to “get back” at children who they believe have rejected them.

What are the warning signs that a child might be a cyberbully? Cyberbullies are secretive about what they do online, and you may find that they’re using accounts that aren’t theirs. They may work on computers and cell phones late at night, but when asked what they’re doing, they’re evasive. Excessive laughter might accompany their online or phone sessions with friends. Cyberbullies often make fun of other children when talking with friends or even with a parent or other adult. You might even get a call from other parents about your child’s behavior.

What should you do if you think your child may be a cyberbully?

- ✓ Talk to your children about their digital activities.
- ✓ Supervise as best you can when the child is using technologies.
- ✓ If you’re comfortable doing so, check what’s on the child’s digital devices, especially computers and cell phones. Although children might object to this as an invasion of privacy, they’re minors and parents have a legal responsibility to know what their children are doing. You could be held liable for your child’s actions.
- ✓ Set rules for cell phone and Internet use. These could include not using computers and digital devices late at night.
- ✓ Encourage empathy and insist that your children show respect for others. Help them learn to appreciate other youngsters who are not close friends and to stand up for those who are picked on.

Check the Cyberbullying Research Center at:

www.cyberbullying.us/cyberbullying_warning_signs.pdf

for a list of warning signs.

Q 4: If my child finds out that another youngster is being cyberbullied, what can he or she do to help?

A: It's difficult for children to stand up to bullies, online or offline. Your child may be afraid to take a stand in public, but privately, he or she may be able to help targets of cyberbullying attacks. After all, "anonymous" can work both ways.



Here's what children can do:

1. Tell the targets that they don't like what the bully is doing.
2. Make an effort to be friends with the targets and invite them to join in activities.
3. Avoid participation in any of the cyberbully's actions—don't forward inappropriate photos or videos, don't go to social networking pages or Web sites set up to humiliate or harass, avoid being in groups that laugh about what's happening to targets of bullying, etc.
4. If the bullying occurs online in a video game or chat room, and everyone is anonymous, speak up for the target. Don't let the bully win.
5. Tell teachers, coaches, or counselors about the bullying.
6. Talk about ideas for helping targets and stopping the bullying.
7. Form a school or community group to fight against bullying.

Tell your children that it is not acceptable to be a bully or a bystander to other people's bullying. Tell them to stand up to their friends and stand up for the targets. Encourage them to stand up and speak out if they see or know about cyberbullying.

Q5: What is sexting and how should I talk to my children about it?

A: Sexting is sending and/or receiving sexually-explicit or sexually-suggestive photos or videos, usually through cell phones. It's illegal, and when it involves minors it is, at this time,* considered child pornography (a felony offense in New York, for example), even if young people are taking and sending photos of themselves. Sexting often involves younger girls sending photos to older boys. Some girls say that boys pressure them to send photos, but boys also get unsolicited photos. Problems escalate when photos are circulated through phones and the Internet. The individuals whose photos are in circulation can feel humiliated and abused, sometimes to the point of considering or attempting suicide.

Sexting among young people ages 11 through 18 is on the rise, so it's important that you talk with your children about this issue, but without sounding threatening or judgmental. You might mention hearing about students sending inappropriate images and videos of themselves. Listen to what they have to say about sexting and help them understand that, although it may seem okay to do among friends, they must resist the pressure to participate, for the consequences are too great. They should know that there's no guarantee that "a friend" will not distribute a photo or video throughout the school and the Internet. Help them imagine how that would feel and how it would affect their self-respect and reputation.

For additional information on sexting and how to deal with it, go to the CyberBullying Research Center's *Sexting a Brief Guide for Parents* at www.cyberbullying.us/Sexting_Fact_Sheet.pdf as well as Common Sense Media's tips on how to talk to kids about sexting at www.common sense.org/talking-about-sexting.

**There are ongoing discussions about legislation as it relates to lessening the penalties for minors. Stay tuned to the Digital Smarts blog on Power to Learn for updates on the law.*

Q6: What are the issues associated with wireless devices?

A: Children can use cell and smart phones, game devices, iPads and laptop/notebook computers both to connect wirelessly to the Web and to communicate digitally. Not all these devices have wireless capability, but if the ones your kids have do, they'll face the dangers associated with desktop computing (accessing inappropriate sites, cyberbullying, interacting with strangers online, downloading viruses) as well as wireless dangers, such as the interception of private messages sent through unsecured networks in public places.

With wireless devices such as cell phones, cyberbullies can easily distribute embarrassing text, video, and photos. Once sent, these are often forwarded to others. Your children should understand that: (1) they must tell you if they receive such content, (2) sending inappropriate video, photos and text will result in serious consequences, and (3) forwarding such content can get them in big trouble with you, possibly with friends and classmates, and maybe their school and the police. They should also know that if they send nude or semi-nude photos of "enemies," friends, or even themselves, this could be considered child pornography by law enforcement.

Because many digital devices are small and mobile, it's difficult to monitor their use. Children won't just be connecting to the Internet from home, and they won't just be connecting from your network. If neighbors live within 300 feet of your house and haven't secured their wireless networks, your children can use those networks to get online. They can also go to the local coffee shop, library or fast food place to get access. You should be aware that the filtering and monitoring software available for desktop and laptop computers is not available at this time for all digital devices. Many new devices--especially game

consoles and many cell phones--include parental controls. Ask before you buy.

Many schools do not allow wireless devices, including cell phones, to be turned on during school hours, and some schools do not allow students to carry wireless devices at all. Both parents and students should be aware of the school rules and be prepared to follow them.

Learn more about securing your wireless network and protecting your children in *What Parents Need to Know: The Wireless World* or learn the basics of this technology in *Everything You Need to Know about Wireless*, both in Internet Smarts at www.powertolearn.com. You can also view Common Sense Media's videos and tips on cell phones at: www.common sense.org/cell-phones-tips, navigating kids' connected culture at: www.common sense.org/digital-life-our-kids-connected-culture, and protecting privacy at: www.common sense.org/protecting-personal-privacy-online.

Q 7: How do I keep up with my children's social networking?

A: Keeping up means knowing what social networks are, understanding why your children enjoy them, guiding and supervising as best you can, helping them deal with bullying that sometimes occurs on these sites, and listening to what your children have to say about their social networking experiences.



What can you do to keep your children as safe as possible:

- ✓ Ensure that your children understand the Acceptable Use Policy of the sites they visit - mostly, this means being respectful and not abusing the system. Don't allow children to lie about their ages. If they aren't old enough, then they don't belong there. Make your expectations clear from the start about postings and interactions. Talk to your children about digital permanence—that whatever they post can follow them forever, even if they take the page down or erase content. Discuss online anonymity and how an online 'friend' may not be the person he or she appears to be.
- ✓ Parental expectations should include privacy settings, the types of photos that are appropriate for posting, keeping personal information private, access to children's pages, who children must consider strangers, how much time and when children can go on a social network, and penalties for not following your expectations. Insist that your children tell you if any news or messages they receive make them uneasy.
- ✓ Social networks can be breeding grounds for cyberbullies. Often using others' passwords and user names, bullies post cruel comments and create pages that ridicule others. Talk to your children about reporting to you if they encounter bullying on a social network and not being part of any group that makes fun of others through social networking.
- ✓ With social networking, as with all digital communication, if you have a good relationship with your children, and they're used to talking with you about their activities, you'll have a much better chance of helping them use social networks safely. BUT--because you can't always be there for your children when they're online, it's important that they learn to take responsibility for their actions so that you can trust them to monitor themselves. That is the biggest step to online safety.
- ✓ Join your children's social networks. Although they might not like

you on “their” network, some parents make it a requirement so they can check their child’s page at any time. Once on the network, look for tips for parents and for members, and browse pages on the network to learn more about this extremely popular Internet activity.

To learn more about social networking, see Common Sense Media’s video and tips at www.commonsense.org/tips-social-networking and *Interactive Case Studies: Social Networking – Don’t Give Yourself Away* and the *What Parents Need to Know* section at www.powertolearn.com.

Q8: What do I need to know about viruses, antivirus software, filters and monitors?

A: When it comes to filters, you can block certain people from emailing you or texting you by changing your preferences or by “unfriending” them on a social networking site. That might help with cyberbullying if it becomes an issue, but if you or your child knows who the bully is, the best policy is just not to open or look at what they send. (Of course if it persists, you will want to make copies of what is sent for authorities.) Kids often send subtle or abbreviated nasties, not something that can be filtered, because only the kids understand what is meant, making filters almost impossible to use, particularly on texts. In the end, when it comes to cyberbullying, the last and best filter is the individual, and you need to teach your children that.

Some filtering and monitoring packages, such as those available through Optimum Online, contain virus protection in addition to child safety software. For details visit the *Filtering, Monitoring & Blocking* section of *Internet Smarts: What Parents Need to Know* at www.powertolearn.com. You can also look at Common Sense Media’s tips on how to help kids protect their privacy and be secure online at www.commonsense.org/staying-safe-and-secure-digital-world.

Q9: What are the consequences for my children and me if they don't use the Internet wisely and legally?

A: Although digital communication is a wonderful way for all of us to interact, it comes with potential problems—cyberbullying, scams and phishing, online predators, sexting, game and Internet addiction, misinformation, and more ... That's why your children need to know how to use digital devices wisely, safely, and legally.

Possible consequences of Internet misuse include:

- ✓ School punishments (detention, cancellation of school accounts) and suspensions/expulsions if a problem happens at school, or if an off-campus problem causes disruption to the school program. Be aware that for some offenses, incidents must be reported to the police.
- ✓ Personal relationship difficulties for your children and difficulties with other parents for you, because of your children's lack of respect for others online.
- ✓ Addiction to online gaming and other Internet activities when children are allowed to spend too much time online.
- ✓ Cancellation of telephone, Internet, and social networking accounts for not using the systems as specified in Acceptable Use Policies or Terms of Service.
- ✓ Civil and/or criminal charges related to cyberbullying, sexting, or other criminal activities. Penalties could include fines, time in juvenile detention centers, or even imprisonment.
- ✓ Online and offline stalking because children failed to keep personal information private.
- ✓ Financial problems related to giving out passwords, credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, and so on to scam artists and those phishing (fishing) for information online.

The list of potential problems goes on as online interaction mushrooms. Realize that online is one of the communities where your children will interact with others. The values you instill in them and the rules you set will guide them toward positive uses of digital devices. Empower them to understand that with the power of the Internet, comes great responsibility.

Q10. What do I need to think about if my children play video games or download podcasts and apps?

A: Many video and computer games have an online component that allows players to compete against friends and strangers, as well as chat and text message with them. To combat cyberbullying and avoid contact with adults posing as kids, make sure you're familiar with the safety features of your game system, including muting and blocking players and guidelines for reporting misconduct. You'll find this information on the Web sites of game console manufacturers. Many children also play online computer games, which often require registration to play. Children should never disclose personal information on these game sites; even providing an e-mail address can subject you to unwanted and inappropriate spam. For more information see *Internet Smarts: What Parents Need to Know - Gaming* at www.powertolearn.com.

Apps are small programs (games, tools, updates) that can be downloaded to mobile devices (Blackberry, Android, iPhone, iTouch, etc.). While many apps are wonderful for learning and entertainment and are free, some contain adult-only content, come with fees and can potentially connect your child to things you may not approve of, such as location-sharing. Make sure your children consult with you about the apps they download.

To learn about whether video games, apps and Web sites are age-appropriate, you can check out Common Sense Media's review and ratings, which are based on child-development criteria.

Q11: My kids go from computer to cell phone to iPod to gaming all day. Should I be worried?

A: These digital gadgets are an integral part of your children's world and being "online" these days--surfing the Web, texting, tweeting or interactive gaming – are just part of growing up. It's estimated that teens spend close to 8 hours a day on a variety of media. Chances are most parents don't know what's going on during that time.



Using and communicating with digital devices may have its dangers, but don't get scared into thinking that digital devices and communication should be off-limits for your children. Today these devices are vital tools for interacting, learning, and getting ready for the job market. But just like teaching your children how to be safe and courteous in the larger world, you need to teach and encourage safe practices and good manners in the digital world. Experts also say that it's very important to take digital breaks often; the brain needs a complete change of scene, and forfeiting downtime may lead to having a harder time learning, remembering information, or coming up with new ideas. So get the kids out playing sports, riding a bike, or just taking an old fashioned walk! And you, too...



Q12: How safe is digital communication for my children?

A: With all kinds of media bombarding our lives today, it seems almost impossible to keep up. You shouldn't expect to know everything about every game, movie, software program, advertisement, or Web site. The good news is that you don't have to be a media or tech guru to keep your children safe. Sure, it's great to learn what you can, but you already know what's best for your children, and that's what is most important.

As a good parent, let common sense be your guide when dealing with your children and the media available today. Help them learn about different types of media, how to avoid media that's inappropriate, how to detect bias, and not to be afraid to ask questions about media messages. When dealing with today's media options, expect your children to live up to the values you've taught them since they were little. Those values are appropriate online as well as off.

There's lots of help for you, too. A variety of sites feature a wealth of information about movies, television programs, games, and more. *Internet Smarts: What Parents Need to Know* at www.powertolearn.com and Common Sense Media both offer comprehensive resources for parents who want to know about keeping their children safe when it comes to the use of media.

Learn about and utilize the parental control options on your cable box, review Internet Smarts, find out about your children's social networking profiles online, do a search on your children's names periodically, don't allow Webcams in bedrooms, and so on. In other words, stay on top of the risks of digital media, and let your children know that you're paying attention. Most important of all, keep talking to them about your digital experiences and theirs.

Online Resources

Delete Cyberbullying: www.powertolearn.com/delete-cyberbullying

Power to Learn's Delete Cyberbullying initiative page includes tip sheets, an online anti-cyberbullying pledge, partner links and much more.

Common Sense Media: www.common sense.org

Common Sense Media provides comprehensive resources on cyberbullying, social networking sites, mobile phones and more. Plus, get age-appropriate reviews and ratings on TV shows, movies, websites, mobile apps, games, music, and books.

Stop Bullying: Speak Up: www.StopBullyingSpeakUp.com

Cartoon Network's site offers resources to empower youth to take action to reduce bullying; including tips, a parents' section, and links to partners.

Netsmartz: www.netsmartz.org

In partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Boys & Girls Clubs of America created NetSmartz, an online, interactive, educational safety resource for kids, teens, parents and educators.

My Club My Life: www.myclubmylife.com

Boys & Girls Clubs are also addressing cyberbullying with teens nationwide via an interactive website targeting teens.

Cyberbullying Research Center: www.cyberbullying.us

Presents research statistics, tips, prevention strategies, stories, fact sheets, handouts, and other downloads to combat cyberbullying.

Stop Bullying Now!: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids

A panel of kids ages 9-13 served as the advisors for this site, which offers video downloads and games that tell you all about bullies, online and offline.

Connect Safely: www.connectsafely.org/Directories/internet-safety-resources.html

A comprehensive collection of online safety resources with many sites specializing in cyberbullying.

National Crime Prevention Council Information on Cyberbullying:
www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying

Details how teens are bullied, reactions to bullying, and what to do about it.

Personal Cyberbullying Stories:

familyinternet.about.com/u/ua/computingsafetyprivacy/Cyberbullyua.htm

Stories on this site are from people who have experienced cyberbullying first hand.

White Paper on Cyberbullying:

www.ncta.com/PublicationType/WhitePaper/Cyberbullying-Damage-in-a-Digital-Age.aspx

The National Cable and Telecommunication white paper on cyberbullying from Common Sense Media discusses the differences between cyberbullying and bullying, the impact of cyberbullying on kids, and what parents, educators, companies, and the government can do about it.

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Power to Learn is pleased to join with the following organizations to delete cyberbullying:



Common Sense Media, an independent nonprofit, is dedicated to helping families and educators guide kids to behave thoughtfully, respectfully, and safely in their digital lives. Visit www.commonsense.org for more information.



Stop Bullying: Speak Up is Cartoon Network's campaign aimed at educating and empowering youth to take action to reduce bullying. Visit StopBullyingSpeakUp.com to join Cartoon Network to speak up against bullying.



Visit us at
www.powertolearn.com