



AIM HIGH PARENT NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER CONTINUES OUR CONVERSATIONS ON CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is becoming an increasing problem among teens in America and it has occurred between Aim High students. Both November and December Parent Newsletters are devoted to this issue and pdf's are on our website. The Cyberbullying Research Center has short articles and tips for both parents and teens. You can visit it at www.cyberbyllying.org © 2015.



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WE AT AIM HIGH WISH YOU A FUN AND JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



Saturday Program Information

All Dates and Programs for the remainder of the School Year can be found on the Aim High Website Parent and Student Section.

<https://aimhighstl.org/for-students/program-information/saturday-sessions/>

Bus Schedules for each site can be found at

<https://aimhighstl.org/our-program/calendar/>

APRIL 14 ALL SITES WILL GO TO THE CARDINAL BASEBALL STADIUM AND HALL OF FAME FOR A SPECIAL MORNING AT THE BALL PARK!

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD CYBERBULLIES OTHERS: Top 10 Tips For Parents

- 1. Acknowledge the issue.** As a parent, accept the reality that your child could be engaging in online behaviors that are hurting others. Rather than try to trivialize, rationalize, or ignore the problem at hand, you realize that anyone (including your own flesh and blood!) can be very cruel to others, given the right circumstances.
- 2. Remain calm.** When addressing cyberbullying, try to discuss the issue in a level-headed manner without demonizing, disrespecting, or judging your child. Remember that your son or daughter isn't the problem; it is the behavior. Deal with it, but treat them with dignity. Otherwise, they may lash out and retaliate if they feel attacked or victimized themselves, and no progress will be made.
- 3. Keep an open line of communication.** Many youth engage in cyberbullying to get revenge for something someone else did first. Make sure that your kids know they can come to you and discuss issues they are having with peers (offline or online). Give kids the opportunity and skillset to solve interpersonal problems in appropriate ways, instead of resorting to revenge.
- 4. Stop the bullying.** Goal #1 is to get the bullying to end and never happen again. Ensure that all instances of bullying are stopped immediately, regardless of who started it. No one deserves to be mistreated, for any reason, ever.
- 5. Understand the root of the problem.** We hear that "hurt people hurt people." It is critical to identify the reason(s) your child has acted out. Is it an unhealthy way of coping with stress in their life? Because they themselves are being victimized? Because there are no rules in place, and no threat of sanctions to deter them? Try to get to the bottom of the issue.

6. Investigate. Take measures to thoroughly find out the extent of your child's bullying. It could span multiple environments, websites, apps, and devices. It could be very direct and observable, or indirect and extremely subtle. Work to get to the bottom of what exactly happened.

7. Make children understand how targets feel. Explain the severity of cyberbullying and how it would feel to be on the receiving end of hate or harassment that specifically highlights the way *your* child would be hurt the most. Try to cultivate empathy and compassion in kids in creative and compelling ways, so that they *really* understand that we all have our sore spots, hot but-tons, and vulnerabilities.

8. Set up parental controls. Monitor your child's online activities, both formally and informally. This can be done through the installation of software or apps on their laptop, tablet, or phone. You should also routinely and randomly check their devices to see what they are doing, at least until you feel sure that they can be trusted.

9. Share your concerns. You are not the only parent who has ever faced these problems. Connect with others so that the entire community can rally around the issue and take a stand. This united front can help to create and promote a culture where all members of a peer group recognize that bullying is always wrong and not cool at all.

10. Stay educated. While we know that your lives are extremely busy, it is important that you take time to continually learn about new technologies and sites that your kids (and their peers) are using. You should also know where to get help (such as www.cyberbullying.org), and interface with others (especially school staff) who have relevant experiences and strategies to share.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS CYBERBULLIED: Top 10 Tips For Parents

- 1. Make sure your child is (and feels) safe.** The safety and well-being of your child should always be the foremost priority. Convey unconditional support. Parents must demonstrate to their children through words and actions that they both desire the same end result: stopping the cyberbullying.
- 2. Talk with and listen to your child.** Engage your child in conversation about what is going on. Refrain from freaking out. Take the time to learn exactly what happened, and the nuanced context in which it occurred. Also, don't minimize the situation or make excuses for the aggressor.
- 3. Collect evidence.** Print out or make screenshots of conversations, messages, pictures, and any other items which can serve as clear proof that your child is being cyberbullied. Keep a record of any and all incidents to assist in the investigative process. Also, keep notes on relevant details like location, frequency, severity of harm, third-party involvement or witnesses, and the backstory.
- 4. Work with the school.** All schools in the U.S. have a bullying policy, and most cover cyberbullying. Seek the help of administrators if the target and aggressor go to the same school. Your child has the right to feel safe at school, and educators are responsible to ensure this through an investigation and appropriate response.
- 5. Refrain from contacting the parents of the bully.** Some parents confronted with accusations that their child is engaging in cyberbullying may become defensive and therefore may not be receptive to your thoughts. Be judicious in your approach to avoid additional drama and possible retaliation.
- 6. Contact the content provider.** Cyberbullying violates the Terms of Service of all legitimate service providers (websites, apps, Internet or cell companies). Regardless of whether your child can identify who is harassing them, contact the relevant provider. An updated list of contact information can be found here: cyberbully-ing.us/report.
- 7. Contact the police when physical threats are involved.** Most states have laws related to online threats, and law enforcement can assist in these cases either informally or formally. If your local department is not helpful, contact county or state law enforcement officials, as they often have more resources and expertise in technology-related offenses.
- 8. If the bullying is based on race, sex, or disability, contact the Office of Civil Rights.** The U.S. Department of Education takes these cases very seriously if children are limited in their ability to learn and thrive at school because of discrimination.
- 9. If necessary, seek counseling.** Your child may benefit from speaking with a mental health professional. Children may prefer to dialogue with a third party who may be perceived as more objective.

10. Implement measures to prevent it from reoccurring. If your child is being bullied through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.), set up privacy controls within each platform to block the bully from contacting them, and file a report (see #6). Also encourage them to keep talking to you before small issues flare up into major situations.



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Questions Parents Should Ask Their Children About Technology

It is important to talk with youth about what they are doing and seeing online. Most of the time, they are using technology safely and responsibly, but sometimes they run into trouble. As a parent, you want to establish an open line of communication so that they are comfortable turning to you in times of crisis, whether perceived or actual, and whether online or off.

Below we list several questions that you can use to get the ball rolling. Be strategic in how you approach your children with these queries: don't badger them with questioning first thing in the morning or when they are stressed out about something at school. Find a time when they are open to your interest in these topics. Maybe it is during a longer car ride to an activity that they are really looking forward to. Or bring them up while you are eating ice cream on a hot summer afternoon. If you catch them at the right time, they will prove to be a treasure trove of information that can help you better understand what they are doing online.

General Tech Use

- What is your favorite website? What do you do on these sites?
- What websites are your friends into these days?
- Are you ever contacted by someone online that you don't know? If yes, what did they want? What did you do? How did you respond?

- Have you ever received a text message from someone that made you upset? How did you respond?
- How do you keep yourself safe online?
- Do you get concerned that people will read what others have written about you online that is not true but think it's true?
- Do you ever talk to anyone online that isn't in your school?

Cyberbullying

- Do you ever argue or post hurtful updates on your Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or other social media site? Why?
- Have you ever had to delete a post or comment on your page that was written by someone else?
- Does cyberbullying happen a lot? Would you feel comfortable telling me if you were being cyberbullied?
- Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously?
- Have you ever had to contact a teacher or someone else at school because of a cyber-threat? If so, did they do something about it and did it help?
- Does your school have a way to anonymously report bullying and cyberbullying?
- Do you feel like your friends would be supportive of you if you told them you were being cyberbullied?
- Do you ever get verbally attacked during online games?
- Have you ever had to leave an online game because someone was bothering you online?



Sexting: Advice for Teens

1. Delete any explicit images sent to you. Even having these images on your phone could land you in a heap of trouble.
2. Do not distribute explicit images. If someone sends you an explicit image of themselves or someone else, do not pass it on to anyone else. Try to think about how you would feel if someone sent similar pictures of you to someone else that you didn't know or wouldn't want to see.
3. Ignore or flat-out reject any requests from others for inappropriate images. It is just not worth it, no matter how much you like the other person—even if you think you can trust them. The potential risk is just too high. If they really care about you, they will understand.
4. Block individuals who make you uncomfortable with how they talk to you (or what they send to you).
5. Distract the person requesting inappropriate pictures from you. Engage them in conversation about something else, or direct them to a cool YouTube video you just saw, or an app you think they would like. If they continue to ask about the pics, let them know that they should just chill out.
6. Don't support your own objectification. You are not a piece of meat. You don't want people to like you because of your body, but because of your mind and heart. Giving in and sending explicit images just feeds their appetite for more, and continues to devalue your worth.
7. Sexting doesn't define a healthy, functional romantic relationship. Sure, it's fun, flirtatious, and risqué, but remember that these images could be seen by a wider audience (including your parents, teachers, or the police).
8. Send images that are suggestive, but not explicit. Keep private parts covered at all times. It's fine to send your partner a picture, just make sure it's PG-13 and not X-rated. Even so, realize that these too may be broadcast to others. If you wouldn't be concerned if your whole school (or grandma!) saw it, it's probably ok.
9. If you receive (or someone shows you) an explicit image of someone you know, contact that person to tell them that their images are being circulated. You would want someone to tell you if an image of yours like that was going around.
10. Inform an adult you trust if you are concerned about the well-being of the person in the image. If you are worried about the person who is in the picture, whether they are a friend or not, you may need to get help from an adult.

Sharing pictures with romantic partners is a natural part of any relationship. It's important, however, that you are doing so safely, responsibly, and appropriately. Exchanging explicit (nude) images is not only uncool, it's illegal. It can get you in trouble with your parents, your school, and even the police. Think twice before taking an explicit picture of yourself, or sending one of yourself—or someone else—to another person. You never know where it could end up or what kind of trouble you could find yourself in. Follow these basic principles to keep your privates private.



**If you have any questions call Jim Jordan
at 314-432-9500, ext 4.**

*'Better Futures Begin in the 6th Grade'
Aim High St. Louis*