NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER FOCUSES 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 will be devoted to this issue. The Cyberbullying Research Center has a wealth of short articles and tips for both parents and teens. You can visit it at www.cyberbyllying.org © 2015.

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THE DECEMBER ISSUE WILL HAVE MORE TIPS AND SAFETY SUGGESTIONS.

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 IS CYBERBULLYING

Kids have been bullying each other for generations. The latest generation, however, has been able to utilize technology to expand their reach and the extent of their harm. This phenomenon is being called cyberbullying, defined as: "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices." Basically, we are referring to incidents where adolescents use technology to harass, threaten, humiliate, or otherwise hassle their peers. For example, youth can send hurtful text messages to others or spread rumors using smartphones or tablets. Teens have also created web pages, videos, and profiles on social media platforms making fun of others. With mobile devices, adolescents have taken pictures in a bedroom, a bathroom, or another location where privacy is expected, and posted or distributed them online. Others have recorded unauthorized videos of other kids and

uploaded them for the world to see, rate, tag, and discuss. Still others are embracing anonymous apps or chat functionality on gaming networks to tear down or humiliate others.

Estimates of the number of youth who experience cyberbullying vary widely (ranging from 10-40% or more), depending on the age of the group studied and how cyberbullying is formally defined. In our research, we inform students that cyberbullying is when someone "repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another per-son through email or text message or when some-one posts something online about another person that they don't like." Using this definition, about 25 percent of the over 10,000 randomly-selected 11-18 year olds we have surveyed over the last seven years have said that they have been cyberbullied at some point in their lifetimes. About 17 percent admitted to cyberbullying others during their lifetime. What are some negative effects that cyber-bullying can have on a person?

There are many detrimental outcomes associated with cyberbullying that reach into the real world. First, many targets report feeling depressed, sad, angry, and frustrated. As one teenager stated: "It makes me hurt both physically and mentally. It scares me and takes away all my confidence. It makes me feel sick and worthless." Those who are victimized by cyberbullying also reveal that they are often afraid or embarrassed to go to school. In addition, research has revealed a link between cyber-bullying and low self-esteem, family problems, academic difficulties, school violence, and various delinquent behaviors. Finally, cyberbullied youth also report having suicidal thoughts, and there have been a number of examples in the United States and abroad where youth who were victimized ended up taking their own lives.

Where does cyberbullying commonly occur?

Cyberbullying occurs across a variety of venues and mediums in cyberspace, and it shouldn't come as a surprise that it occurs most often where teenagers congregate. Initially, many kids hung out in chat rooms, and as a result that is where most harassment took place. In recent years, most youth are/have been drawn to social media (such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter) and video-sharing sites (such as YouTube). This trend has led to in-creased reports of cyberbullying occurring in those environments. Voice chat, textual chat, and texting via phones or tablets also can provide an environment in which hate and harm is expressed. We are also seeing it happen with portable gaming devices, in 3-D virtual worlds and social gaming sites, and in newer interactive apps like Yik Yak, Secret, and Whisper.
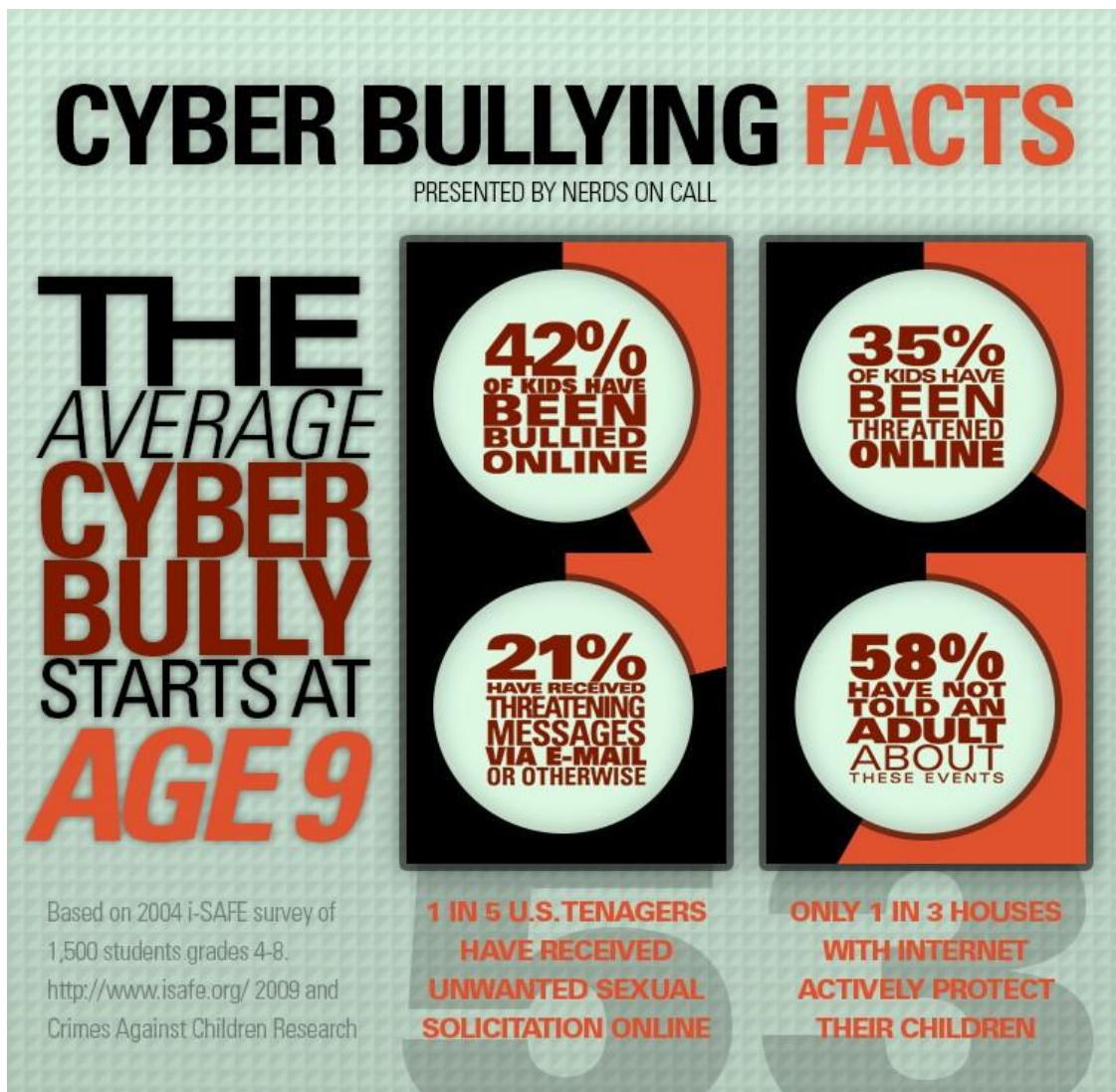
Cyberbullying Warning Signs: Red flags that a child is involved in cyberbullying

Cyberbullying impacts at least one out of every five middle and high school students. Many of those who experience it don't tell anyone. If a child displays any of these signs, he or she might be involved. However, not all youth who are cyberbullied or who cyberbully others will display these signs, and some who do show these signs may have other problems in their lives that should be addressed. Take the time to investigate further if you see any of these red flags among the youth you care for.

A Child May Be a Target of Cyberbullying If He or She:

1. unexpectedly stops using their device(s)
2. appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
3. appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
4. appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after going online (including gaming)
5. is oversleeping or not sleeping enough
6. becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members
7. shows increase or decrease in eating
8. seems regularly depressed
9. makes passing statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
10. Loses interest in the things that mattered most to them
11. avoids discussions about what they are doing online frequently calls or texts from school requesting to go home ill
12. desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
13. becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities

www.facebook.com/AwarenessBeyondArt
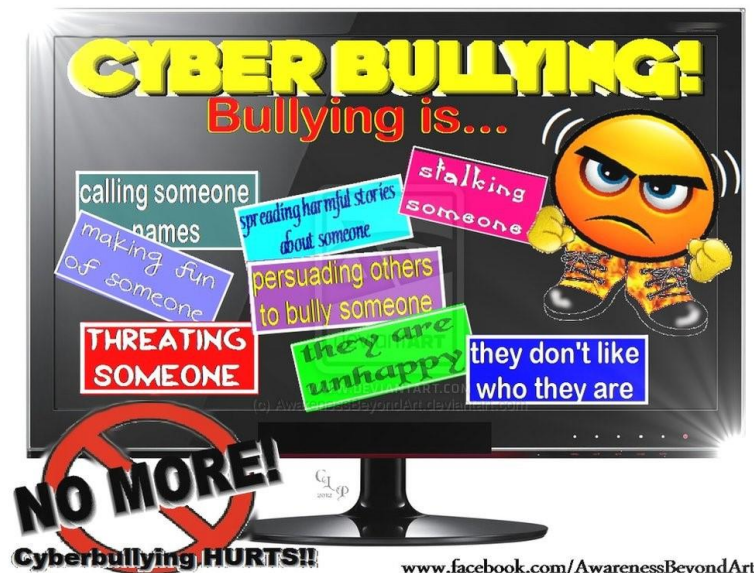
A Child May Be Cyberbullying Others If He or She:

1. quickly switches screens or hides their device when you are close by
2. uses their device(s) at all hours of the night
3. gets unusually upset if they can't use their device(s)
4. laughs excessively while using their device(s) and won't show you what is so funny
5. avoids discussions about what they are doing online
6. seems to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not their own
7. is dealing with increased behavioral issues or disciplinary actions at school (or elsewhere)
8. appears overly concerned with popularity or continued presence in a particular social circle or status
9. demonstrates increasing insensitivity or callousness toward other teens
10. tarts to hang out with the "wrong" crowd
11. demonstrates violent tendencies appears overly conceited as to their technological skills and abilities
12. is increasingly withdrawn or isolated from the family

Preventing Cyberbullying: Top 10 Tips for Parents

1. Establish that **all rules for interacting with people in real life also apply for interacting online** or through cell phones. **Convey that cyberbullying inflicts harm** and causes pain in the real world as well as in cyberspace.

2. Make sure your school has Internet Safety educational programming in place. This should not solely cover the threat of sexual predators, but also how to prevent and respond to online peer harassment, interact wisely through social networking sites, and engage in responsible and ethical online communications.

3. Educate your children about appropriate Internet-based behaviors. Explain to them the problems that can be created when technology is misused (e.g., damaging their reputation, getting in trouble at school or with the police).

4. Model appropriate technology usage. Don't harass or joke about others while online, especially around your children. Don't text while driving. Your kids are watching and learning.

5. Monitor your child's activities while they are online. This can be done informally (through active participation in, and supervision of, your child's online experience) and formally (through software). Use discretion when covertly spying on your kids. This could cause more harm than good if your child feels their privacy has been violated.

They may go completely underground with their online behaviors and deliberately work to hide their actions from you.

6. Use filtering and blocking software as a part of a *comprehensive* approach to online safety, but understand software programs *alone* will not keep kids safe or prevent them from bullying others or accessing inappropriate content. Most tech-savvy youth can figure out ways around filters very quickly.

7. Look for warning signs that something abnormal is going on with respect to their technology usage. If your child becomes withdrawn or their Internet use becomes obsessive, they could either be a victim or a perpetrator of cyberbullying.

8. Utilize an "Internet Use Contract" and a "Cell Phone Use Contract" to foster a crystal-clear understanding about what is appropriate and what is not with respect to the use of communications technology. To remind the child of this pledged commitment, we recommend that these contracts be posted in a highly visible place (e.g., next to the computer).

9. Cultivate and maintain an open, candid line of communication with your children, so that they are ready and willing to come to you whenever they experience something unpleasant or distressing in cyberspace. Victims of cyberbullying (and the bystanders who observe it) must know for sure that the adults who they tell will intervene rationally and logically, and not make the situation worse.

10. Teach and reinforce positive morals and values about how others should be treated with respect and dignity.

9th Grade Program Revision

Aim High Staff are busy redesigning the 9th Grade Summer Program to ensure that:

- **our achievers are prepared for High School**
- **take part in leadership training and have more leadership opportunities**
- **explore future options and explore their skills and interests**
- **understand and develop a path towards High School Graduation and BEYOND!**

We will be providing more information about the new 9th Grade Program in 2018. We are excited about the new additions our 9th grade students will experience.