GETTING STARTED WITH CYBERBULLYING PREVENTION

CyberSmart!
21st century skills
for education

Your child is taking part in classroom lessons from the CyberSmart! Student Curriculum in order to begin a dialogue about cyberbullying prevention. CyberSmart!'s approach is standards- and research-based. We focus on adopting best practices from face-to-face bullying prevention, school violence prevention, character education, and cyber security education.

CyberSmart! believes that students should have access to and instruction in the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies for learning, for socialization, and for preparing for college and 21st century work and citizenship. Filters and other technological solutions for protecting children online are not a substitute for teaching children how to stay safe online.

What is cyberbullying?

The formal definition of *cyberbullying* is intentional and repeated use of computer and cell phone networks by kids and teens to cause harm or distress to other kids and teens.

Here's what we teach fourth and fifth graders about cyberbullying:

- The words of others can make you feel frustrated, angry, or sad.
- You should be able to go online or use cell phones without fear of being cyberbullied.
- Sometimes children in groups do things that they would not think of doing alone.
- Bystanders to cyberbullying can, by their actions, makes things better or worse.
- Everyone has a right to be treated fairly and a responsibility to treat others fairly.
- If you witness or are the target of cyberbullying, block the bully, get offline, and tell a trusted adult.
- Don't share passwords with anyone except your parents.
- Watch your language: If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online.
- Language that says you intend to hurt someone will be taken very seriously.

Here's what families can do:

- Start a conversation with your children about cyberbullying. Ask them to tell you what they know about it. Ask if they have ever witnessed cyberbullying.
- Talk with your children about positive roles they can take when they witness cyberbullying, such as supporting the target and letting the bully know that the behavior is not acceptable.
- Talk about ways to handle these incidents when your child is the target of cyberbullying. Emphasize that when they get angry with other kids, it's best to stop what they are doing, get offline, and help themselves calm down. Brainstorm ways to cool their anger, such as taking slow, deep breaths.
- Tell your children that you understand that cyberbullying is just as serious as face-to-face bullying. In fact, because it can take place when they are home at night or on weekends, it can often be more intrusive and upsetting than schoolyard bullying.
- Supervise your children when they are online—even when they are playing on age-appropriate, password-protected Web sites.