

Cyberbullying News Articles



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Cyberbullies - Out of the Playground into your Home

By Amy Cainfield

Cyberbullying in recent years has become a disturbing and damaging trend that affects children and teens in an increasingly alarming way. Its significance is particularly pertinent for children and teenagers using this technology on a regular basis.

Cyberbullying manifests in a number of forms. The definition encompasses the use of internet, instant messaging, text, pxt, pager, chat rooms, blogs, websites and emails for the purpose of intimidation.

From primary school age through to adolescents and on to young adults, these communication resources are used on a daily basis.

Often Cyberbullying is an extension of playground or school bullying. The disturbing thing about this kind of bullying is it continues outside of school and can become an overwhelming presence in the victim's life.

SMS

The use of abusive and threatening text messages is a common form of cyberbullying. This kind of bullying can be extremely damaging as it is extended beyond the school grounds and into the home.

Unlike computers, mobiles are hard to monitor. Children and teenagers often are inseparable from their phones so bullying can be unrelenting. Text messages have been directly responsible for numerous cases of adolescent and teen suicide.

Other ways in which sms is used by bullies is to spread harmful rumours about a person. You can reach a high number of people in a very short amount of time by simply sending an sms.

Websites

The power of cyberbullying is that it can be anonymous and hard to counteract.

With online bullying it is particularly hard to identify bullies. The use of defamatory and derogatory websites, blogs and photos is a common way for bullies to victimise and intimidate others.

These sites can be extremely cruel and harmful to the person being targeted. Bullies use this medium to reach a large audience with whom they can put down the victim.

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Chat rooms

Chat rooms are a breeding ground for cyberbullies. Through the use of these rooms and instant messages cyberbullies threaten, intimidate and abuse their victims.

These could be anonymous strangers or people known to the victim. Either way this kind of bullying has dangerous consequences and can be extremely distressing for the child.

Emails

Bullies use emails to harass their victims as well as to spread harmful information about them. Emails are difficult to track as it is very easy to set up fake user accounts and send emails from a public computer.

Cyber savvy bullies also have been known to hack into email accounts and send false emails in the victim's name.

Cyberbullying adds another dimension to school yard bullying. Children who partake in these kinds of behaviours do not receive the same kind of feedback as they would in a physical face-to-face scenario.

This means that they will feel less remorse as they will not see the affect their behaviour is having on the victim. Their behaviour seemingly has no tangible consequences so they feel little connection to their actions or the person they are hurting.

Cyberbullying is a serious problem and one that has commanded the attention of schools and parents alike.

Preventing bullying from occurring is about education and monitoring. If you believe your child is a victim or might be inclined towards bullying you need to take action.

Learn all you can about the internet and other technologies your child may be using. Consider restricting your child's access to an independent mobile phone.

Monitor your child's internet use and talk to your child about cyberbullying. You could save your child's life by keeping an eye on their online interactions. You can monitor chat rooms, emails and websites with parental control software. It could make all the difference for your child.

Children who suffer from low self-esteem often become victims of this kind of bullying. Get involved in your child's development and stay involved.

Helping your child develop strong self worth at a young age will help you to prevent them becoming a bully or a victim.

The most important thing you can do is talk to your children and keep in touch with what is going on in their lives.

Remain active in the prevention of cyberbullying by educating yourself and your child.