

Back to School Safety

Talk with your kids before they go back to school...

Stomp Out Bullying Cyber-Bullying

Bullying... is intimidating or subjecting a person to hostility or ill treatment .Involves actions which cause another person to feel afraid, humiliated, embarrassed, threatened or shamed. Occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power. Is repeated over time.

What does bullying look like?

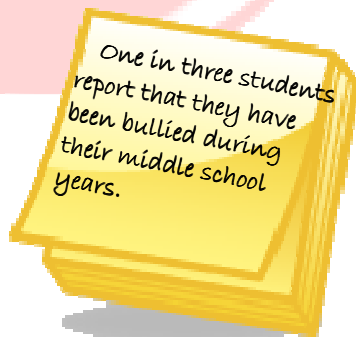
- People calling you names
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
- Taking things away from someone
- Damaging belongings
- Stealing money
- Taking friends away
- Spreading rumors
- Threats and intimidation

What if you are being bullied?

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear - look the bully in the eye and tell him/her to stop
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible and tell an adult what has happened immediately

What can you do?

- Recognize bullying and don't be a bully
- Stand-up for others if you see bullying happen or tell an adult about the situation
- Never encourage bullying behavior
- Be respectful of all classmates, teachers and others you are in contact with and enjoy how you are alike and different



Cyber bullying involves the use of information and technology such as e-mail, instant messaging, the publishing of personal websites, and online personal polling websites that are used to support conscious, willful, deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by one or more people with the intent to harm others.

How to Prevent Cyber-bullying

- Don't give out private information (Passwords, PIN)
- Be careful about posting personal information such as name, address and cell numbers
- Don't share buddy lists
- Delete messages from people you don't know
- When something doesn't sound right, leave the chat room
- Assume no digital communication is private



What to do if you are Cyber-bullied

- Tell a trusted adult
- Don't open or read messages from cyber-bullies
- Don't react to the bully
- If it is at school, tell a trusted adult at school
- Don't erase the message or images
- Block the bully
- If you are threatened, inform the police

How to Prevent being a Cyber-bully

- Don't e-mail when you are angry
- Don't e-mail with friends and target someone for entertainment
- Don't forward an e-mail that someone sent as a private message

It is virtual bullying and cyber-bully feels anonymous.

Suicide

- Be aware. Learn the warning signs.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Ask if he/she is thinking about suicide.
- Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow for expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Don't dare him/her to do it.
- Don't tell them to behave differently.
- Don't ask "why" This encourages defensiveness.

Internet Safety

- **Create an open dialogue** with your child to talk about their activities on the internet and create rules for computer use.
- **Adults and youth use computers in different ways** for different things. Engage your child as your teacher in what's available online that you don't know about.
- Place home computers with internet access in a visible location where you can monitor your child's activities.
- **Surf the internet with your child and discuss where the child likes to go and what they like to do.** Use the time to educate your child on the dangers of visiting inappropriate sites, opening unknown e-mails/messages, befriending virtual acquaintances, and giving out personal information online.
- **Activate or buy software or navigation programs** that limit your child's internet use. Remember that software does not take the place of parental guidance.
- **Help your children create accounts/profiles** on social networking sites, and know the password to any account he/she creates, just as you reserve the right to go into their room in your house. Also, create your own account on social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace) and mandate your child add you as a friend. This gives you access to your child's personal web-pages and activities.



Drugs/Alcohol

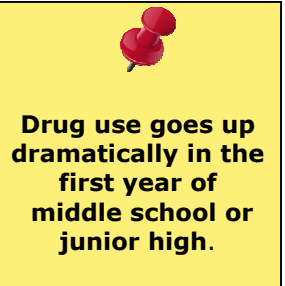
As your child enters middle school it is an ideal time to emphasize the importance of being drug and alcohol-free.

- Make sure they are well-versed in the reasons to avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs;
- Get to know your child's friends by taking them to and from after-school activities, games, the library and movies (while being sensitive to their need to feel independent);
- Volunteer for activities where you can observe your child at school; and
- Get acquainted with the parents of your children's friends and learn about their children's interests and habits. If it seems that your child is attracted to those with bad habits reiterate why drug use is unacceptable.

To make sure that your child's life is structured in such a way that drugs have no place in it, you should:

- If possible, arrange to have your children looked after and engaged in the after-school hours if you cannot be with them. Encourage them to get involved with reputable youth groups, arts, music, sports, community service and academic clubs.
- Make sure children who are unattended for periods during the day feel your presence. Give them a schedule and set limits on their behavior. Give them household chores to accomplish. Enforce a strict phone-in-to-you policy.
- Get to know the parents of your child's friends. Exchange phone numbers and addresses.
- Call parents whose home is to be used for a party. Make sure they can assure you that no alcoholic beverages or illegal substances will be dispensed.
- Make it easy for your child to leave a place where substances are being used. Discuss with your child in advance how to contact you.
- Encourage open dialogue with your children about their experiences.

Adapted from U.S. Department of Ed



Suicide Continued

- Offer empathy, not sympathy.
- Don't act shocked. This creates distance.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available, do not offer glib reassurance; it only proves you don't understand.

- Take action! Remove means! Get help from individuals or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention



Suicide information from:

Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group <http://www.kentuckysuicideprevention.org/index.html>