Cyber Bullying – How can I Protect Myself

Recent research from I-safe America has discovered a disturbing trend—cyber bullying has affected more than half the students surveyed, on both sides of the issue. Their latest assessments surveyed more than 1500 students ranging from fourth to tenth grade across the country. They found out:
58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online
53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful things to another online
42% of kids have been bullied while online

The tradition of home as a refuge from bullies on the school playground is over. The Internet is the new playground, and there are no off hours. The popularity of instant messaging, e-mail, web pages, and blogging means kids are a target 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Even worse, i-SAFE found out 58 percent of kids have not told their parents or any adult about something mean or hurtful that had happened to them online. Teachers and school officials need to be aware of the rising trend of cyber bullying as incidents online are brought onto school grounds.

Tips to share with students who are being cyber bullied:
1. Tell a trusted adult and keep telling them until they take action.
2. Never open, read or respond to messages from cyber bullies.
3. If it is school related, tell your school. All schools have bullying solutions.
4. Do not erase the messages. They may be needed to take action.
5. If bullied through chat or IM, the bully can often be blocked.
6. If you are threatened with harm, call the police.
7. Above all, students are the cure to the cyber bullying epidemic. By speaking out and telling adults, they can stop bullying online and make the internet experience a more positive one.

Cyber Bullying: Breaking It Down
Beware of the Cyber Bully
Cyber Bullying is verbal harassment that occurs during online activities.
Cyber Bullying can take many forms. These are a few:

* A threatening e-mail
* Mean instant messaging session
* Repeated notes sent to the cell phone
* A website set up to mock others
* “Borrowing” someone’s screen name and pretending to be them while posting a message.
* Forwarding supposedly private messages, pictures, or video to others.
Prevention Techniques for Cyber Bullying

1. Don’t give out private information such as passwords, pins, name, address, phone number, school name, or family and friends’ names. This information can be used by bullies and other harmful people on the Internet. Don’t even reveal your password to your friends. They might reveal it or use it against you in a fight.

2. Don’t exchange pictures or give out e-mail addresses to people you meet on the Internet. Ask permission from parents when it is necessary to give such information.

3. Don’t send a message when you are angry—it’s hard to undo things that are said in anger.

4. Delete messages from people you don’t know, or those from people who seem angry or mean.

5. When something doesn’t seem right, it probably isn’t. Get out of the site, chat, etc.

6. Realize that online conversations are not private. Others can copy, print, and share what you say or any pictures you send.

   Be careful!

Remember: Your guidance counselor can help!

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Information adapted from: Cyber Bullying i-SAFE America Inc.