

Bullying Intervention and Prevention

What Parents can do

- Promote confidence.
- Use consistent discipline.
- Negotiate and seek compromises with children.
- Enhance self-esteem of children.
- Give children responsibility.
- Model good behaviour.
- Use non-violent discipline.
- Promote harmony in the home.
- Encourage positive communication among siblings.
- If your children appear to be aggressive, monitor what they are watching on television and computer games. Talk to them. It may be an indication that they are being bullied.
- Ban all aggressive language and behaviour in your home.
- Challenge them with realistic expectations. Acknowledge and reward good behaviour and celebrate success.

Remember

- Empower children to report bullying.
- Check out the anti-bullying policy in the school.
- Empower the school to deal with bullying.
- Discuss bullying behaviour with your children.
- Put limits on time online.
- Monitor reactions to their time online.
- Discuss mobile phone bullying.
- Don't allow televisions and personal computers in bedrooms.
- Computers connected to Internet should be in central locations in home.
- Watch out for signs of bullying.

If your child is being bullied or bullying

- Get as much detail as you can from child.
- Keep records.
- Contact class teacher / principal.
- Allow school to deal with it.
- Check out school's policy.
- Monitor how the school is handling the situation. Seek review / follow up meetings.
- If there has been physical violence outside of school contact the Gardaí.
- If not resolved by the school, you can contact the Board of Management or the Department of Education & Skills.

After all, you are the Parents. You have responsibilities.

Cyber-Bullying Advice for Parents

1. *Educate yourself about online safety issues.* Banning a child from certain sites may only motivate them to spend more time on them, whereas educating your child on how to keep safe will give them the tools they need to navigate their online world without being hurt. If the parents know the dangers themselves, this sets an example to the child to understand them as well.
2. *Keep personal information private.* Teach your children not to give out their names, addresses, phone numbers, schools, passwords or other personal information online.
3. *Get software help.* Family safety software is becoming extremely easy and effective to use in filtering dangerous content. Additionally, this software usually comes with tools like time management, remote monitoring and reporting, making the internet a safer place for your children.
4. *Know the dangers associated with the sites your children frequent.* Whether it's Facebook or other social networking sites, by being aware of the potential pitfalls of the different sites and educating your children, you can help them have a safer internet experience.
5. *Set boundaries with your children.* Let your children know that if they find themselves confronted with something that makes them feel uncomfortable such as cyber-bullying or graphic content, they should switch off the monitor and come and tell you about it.
6. *Time Management.* Set out ground rules of what times your children can use the internet (i.e. when you are there) and for how long.
7. *Online code of conduct contract.* Giving your children specific guidelines to follow will ensure they know where they stand when it comes to how they use the internet as well as the consequences when they breach the rules. If a parent enforces consequences consistently, their children will be more likely to follow the rules.
8. *Computers in family rooms, not bedrooms.* With PCs in the open, children will be less inclined to view and access material that may not be acceptable, or to spend long amounts of time online.
9. *Open Communication.* Open communication and trust is extremely valuable. By letting children know what is expected of them and that their safety is the main focus for the rules and restrictions, they will feel that if something goes wrong they can approach you to resolve the issue without feeling they are in trouble or will lose all access to the internet.
10. *Get to know your children's online friends.* Spend time getting to know who your children are hanging out with online just like you would if they were in person.

Marion Flanagan M.Ed.
Anti-Bullying Tutor