

PTA Meeting Minutes for March 12, 2012

Social Networking: How Social Networking Relates to Today's Students

The meeting was held in the Boynton library. During the program, several members of our community spoke about teens, social networking, texting, Internet use, and related topics. Each panelist spoke for 5–10 minutes, and then the panel fielded questions from the audience.

Note that the PDF version of these minutes contains all the handouts.

Minutes taken by Tonya Engst, DeWitt PTA Secretary

Janice Johnson, Tompkins County Department of Youth Services

Janice gave a presentation called “Teens and Mobile Phones.” Her detailed PowerPoint slides are included later in this document. Here are some of the points from her presentation:

- * Communicate about any desired rules before you give a mobile phone to a teen.
- * Consider how you will train your child to use the phone appropriately and how will you help them practice?
- * 2010 Youth Development Survey of 6–8th graders in Tompkins County: 35% of middle schoolers don't have a mobile phones, 14% of high schoolers don't have one. 1 in 5 use their phone after their parents are in bed. 10% of middle schoolers and 41% of high schoolers use their phones at school.
- * If you are being bullied by phone/text, you can change phone number for free.
- * You can suspend services to a cell number, but phone can still be used for 911.
- * Research the features offered by your teen's phone's carrier:
 - Look on the carrier's website for services called something like “restrictions.” For example, you can probably restrict different types of mobile phone services on a time-based basis, such as during sleeping times And you can block up to 10 incoming numbers for an account.
 - AT&T and Verizon, for instance, have Locator services, so you can tell where your student is. Receive updates when a particular phone arrives or leaves certain locations.
 - Check on content filters offered by the carrier.
 - You can look at the cell phone's account to see what time of day and where text and voice conversations are coming from and going to, and for how long, and more.
- * What about using phone as alarm clock? FYI, in most cases a phone can have everything turned off except for the alarm.

Jarett Powers, Principal at Ithaca High School

Here are the highlights from Mr. Powers's detailed comments:

Pros of Text Messaging and Internet Use

- * Kids learn how to socialize and learn what's appropriate in the online context.

- * Quick way to share information among people, or to check on facts.
- * Colleges use text messages to communicate with students, for example if a student was awarded a scholarship.
- * Kids can use text messages to communicate with parents about when they will need a ride home from field trips, or to tell them about weather-related cancellations.

Downsides of Text Messaging and Internet Use

- * Information can come from anonymous sources. For example, a student could receive a scary, harassing, or inappropriate text message from a stranger.
- * Kids might get on Facebook and use it for trash-talking about an upcoming sports event and then later during the real-life event, the talk that's already happened online can change the tone of that event.
- * Texts about when a fight is planned can circulate widely, causing the fight to have a lot more people showing up at it.
- * Information might be unwanted:

---For example, in the case of sexting, kids might do it for attention or to harass. To shock or to gain power over someone else.

---For another example, cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying usually occurs outside the school day, say at 3 AM on Facebook. Students sometimes say truly horrid things to one another. Sometimes cyber-bullying can "materially disrupt the school day," and if that occurs, the school can invoke the code of conduct to deal with it. Mr. Powers hopes that adults will trust the school enough to call and share what's going on if problems occur. A problem could be handled through discipline, mediation, social work, etc.

---A third example is posting of photos or videos in inappropriate ways. With a cell phone camera, photos can be taken and posted on the Internet (Facebook, My Space, etc.) and the nature of the picture or video can be disruptive. For example, some students videotaped a fight instead of doing anything to stop the fight or report it, and the tape was posted on YouTube.

How to Prevent Problems

- * Try to work with kids to help them think about what their online identity is—what do they really want to put out there?
- * The school tries to block social media sites on the school computers, but it can't block what kids are getting on their mobile phones.

Janet Aboud, IHS Associate Principal

The Ithaca High School senior class has a Facebook page, which seems to be a pro of the entire social networking situation, but what she spends her time on is when problems occur with social networking etc., so she knows more about the problems than about what's working well.

The people who run Ithaca High aren't interested in extending the school's responsibility to the entire realm of what kids do on the Internet, but they don't want school disrupted by its use, and they'd like the kids to get the positive benefits without suffering from the negatives.

There was a Twitter situation in the fall, involving maybe 40 families, where the school called families to make sure they knew what was going on, so that the families could have conversations and so that students can learn how to use social networking appropriately.

Don't hesitate to call her if a problem occurs, and strive to keep communication going with your teen. She is most concerned, in fact, about what's not being brought to her attention--kids who might be afraid to speak up if they are being harassed.

Lyn Staack, Youth Educator at The Advocacy Center

Lyn is part of the Technology and Communication Program at The Advocacy Center in Ithaca (<http://www.theadvocacycenter.org/>). For a parent trying to think about supporting a child using social media and the Internet, she shared these observations:

- * As a parent it can be helpful to ask your child what they see as the pros and cons of a situation, as a way to have a conversation.
- * Don't be afraid to parent in this area. Check on your kids' cell phone use, or friend your kid on Facebook and see what's there. Charge phones in a central spot in the house, not in the bedroom. Talk about (and model...) when it is appropriate to text. Talk about (and model) what kind of information is appropriate to text.
- * Curiosity is normal (i.e. about sex), but the amount and range of information available on the Internet is enormous and might be overwhelming.
- * Technology makes communication more interactive. Students don't just consume (as parents might have in the old days when technology was mostly from big companies to viewers, like old-fashioned TV), they also create.
- * Communication with digital technology is often immediate. In the old days, getting a photo was a long process where you had to purchase film, load the film into an analog camera, take the photos, and then have the film processed. Now, a camera can take and send a picture in only a few seconds. But, the picture is potentially permanent on the Internet.
- * Communication on the Internet is often unmoderated and impersonal. You might not know who you are really talking to. How do you know if you can trust someone? How do you evaluate if something is true? These are skills that need to be learned, and parents may need to stay checked-in, in order to help.

Celia Clement, Social Worker at Northeast Elementary School

Celia shared many observations; here are the highlights:

- * You are allowed to join Facebook once you are 13 years old, but many lie about their age and join earlier. And sometimes parents aren't even aware that they have.
- * For younger kids, monitor what they are texting until you see that they can handle the responsibility. From the beginning it is very important to set expectations.
- * Have a central station where phones get charged at night, so that kids don't use the phones at night. This is very common. There is a health issue with not getting good sleep. Plus kids are tired and not thinking as rationally, so it's an especially poor time to text.
- * Make sure kids know that they aren't allowed to bring phone to table, or whatever the rules are at your house.

- * Addiction can happen. As in Farmville, which is a Facebook game. Or World of Warcraft is another example.
- * She suggests that you limit kids' time with electronics, and make sure they spend time outside and that they spend time with friends face-to-face. It is important for kids to learn to communicate face-to-face when they are angry or upset, since text messages or email messages about those emotions often don't work out well.
- * If kids switches screens as soon as you walk in, that's a sign that your child is trying to hide something.
- * Ask your child questions about what they are doing. If you ask, they will often tell you quite a lot. Frequent conversations with kids can be a good idea.
- * Kids need to learn how to handle email chain letters—they should not forward them.
- * Communications received on a computer, as well as text messages can often be traced. A good way to handle that for middle schoolers, if you can figure out where a message came from, is for you (the parent) to call the parent of the student who did it. It's best if that behavior gets shut down and the student doesn't learn that they can get away with it.
- * Check on which apps they've downloaded. Note that iPod touches can download apps too, even though they aren't smartphones.

Questions

What about playing games or interacting with people anywhere in the world who are strangers?

Keep in mind that this is much safer than seeing strangers in real life and actually they are likely just playing an online game with the stranger)--it's not inherently dangerous. BUT kids need to know not to give out their personal contact info or agree to meet people.

Clearly different parents and children will have different comfort levels, and this was expressed by various meeting attendees.

A parent suggested using a program called NetNanny to control quite a lot about how a computer is used, not just in terms of time, but in terms of content.

The Parent Caregiver area of ICSD Website anti-bullying area apparently has links to some of these tools.

Another parent suggested getting rid of bad ads with a tool called Ad Block Plus.

Health effects of wireless communication?

Cancer? Addiction? Waste of time? (kids bring each of these up as effects that they are concerned about)

As a parent, you can ask yourself: how do these technologies effect relationships? Can this child self-regulate or how can I help them learn how to do so?

Students may need to learn not to use text messaging abbreviations in formal writing. Also, they need to keep up penmanship because occasionally it still happens that you need to do handwriting, such as a small portion of the SAT.

If something is typed, and the spell check and grammar check OK'd it, is it done? Kids sometimes think it is, but they are often wrong.

In a lot of online interactions, a little bit is fine and you get normalized and then all the sudden it can become too much. For example, how many times in a relationship is it nice to get a text and when is it too much? You slide into it before you realize it. Remember, MISTAKES WILL BE MADE. This is a learning process for parents and students.

What is in code of conduct about technology?

For the school to take action it must be a material disruption of the school day. Classroom disturbance, for instance. School also might advise and support a family in contacting law enforcement.

Three places where these topics come up in the code of conduct:

- * When using a school computer, students must use the technology for purposes that are educationally sanctioned, so, for example, no pornography, no drug deals, no communication about where alcohol is.
- * When you can and can't use a personal electronic device, and when a device could be confiscated and returned.
- * Harassment section has a section about cyber-bullying.

A parent spoke earnestly about the need for parents to converse with their kids about what they might find out there in the world, whether it's physical stuff, older media, or Internet.

Can IHS just shut down cellphone use in class?

- * In some cases cellphones are used as part of class.
- * It is up to the teacher.
- * Kids can get very upset, so it can be very disruptive to the class.
- * This is challenging.

Is school teaching kids how to evaluate Internet information with a critical eye?

- * Librarians share information about good sites.
- * Social studies classes work on media literacy.
- * Middle schools are developing a Digital Literacy curriculum.

Ideas for having a meaningful conversation?

- * Start young.
- * Start with harmless questions.
- * Ask if a thing you are concerned about has happened to some other kid.
- * Ask your teen's friends, but not in way that will embarrass your kid.

Tips and Tricks to monitor cell phones and other things a cell phone can do!

Most Cell phone companies have controls you can put on cell phones that you are the primary owner of. So if you have a family plan you can put controls on your children's phones. Many of these service can be done on your carriers web site (Verizon, AT&T, etc.). The services are also outlined in detail on the carriers web page. You will need a member log in account to begin. If you have an account you can look up any phone that is on your account and see the time, length of call, and phone number that has been made or received for voice calls. You can also see the time and number for any text messages, if it was sent or received, and approximate location of where it was sent from.

Some services are free, others you need to pay for.

- Get a phone number changed due to harassment or bullying.
- Suspend Service due to a lost phone.
- Put time use restrictions for certain times of the day or days of the week.
- \$\$ Usage controls that set allowances for voice and messaging usage; can restrict voice and data services during designated times of day or week; block calls and messages; block 411 calls, block private callers; create a list of trusted numbers.
- \$\$ Smart Lines: set the number of minutes and texts, set dollar amounts for downloads, set web browsing amounts, set times of day phone can be used, who the phone can call/text incoming and out going.
- \$\$ Family locator: find out where the phone is and get alerts when the phone reaches certain destinations.
- \$\$ Trusted numbers lets those numbers receive text messages and phone calls even after all the minutes are used.
- Content Filters allows you to put filters for certain age ranges so appropriate data, and down loads can only be done for the age range you choose. 7+, 13+, 17+

Teens and Mobile Phones



- TX (Thanks) for having me.
- MHOTY (My hats off to you) for being concerned about this topic
- H2S Because texting is (here to stay)

2010 Youth Development Survey

- Most Students have cell phones: 35% of middle schoolers don't, 14% of high schoolers don't.
- One in five students use their cell phones after their parents were in bed.
- 9% confessed to sending or forwarding gossip.
- 2% forwarded embarrassing photos or threats.
- 10% of middle and 41% of high school students used their cell phones during school.

Teens & Mobile Phones

➤ According to Pew Internet & American Life Project:

- Cell phone texting has become the preferred channel of communication between teens and cell phone calling is second.
- 1 in 3 teens send more than 100 messages a day, or 3,000 a month.
- Boys typically send & receive 30 texts a day; girls 80.

PEW Research Continued:

- 64% of parents look at the contents of their child's cell phone.
- 62% have taken away their child's phone as punishment.
- 46% of parents limit the minutes their children may talk.
- 52% limit the times of day they may use the phone.

Cell phones a mixed blessing:

- 98% of parents whose teens own cell phones say it is so they can stay in touch.
- 94% of parents and 93% of teens say they feel safer due to their cell phones.
- 94% of cell users age 12-17 say cell phones give them more freedom.
- 83% use their phones to take pictures.

Cyber Misuse!

- 54% of text using teens have received spam or other unwanted texts.
- 26% have been bullied or harassed through text messages & cell calls.
- 15% of teens say they have received a sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude image of someone they know.
- Older teens are more likely to receive “sexts” than younger teens.

How Can We Manage Our Teens Phones



Change a phone number

- Most carriers will change your phone number for free if you are being harassed or bullied. This is true for children as well as adults.



Suspend Service

- Free from Verizon and AT&T.
- Can be used if a phone is lost or stolen to avoid unauthorized use.
- Calls can still be made to 911 and 611 (customer services).

Time Restrictions

- Verizon free service
- Time restrictions limit and control your child's use of his or her cell phone during a certain time or day or day of week.
- You can add up to 10 restrictions for each account member.

Usage Controls

- \$4.99 Verizon
- Sets allowances for voice and messaging usage.
- Controlled line receive text alert when nearing allowance.
- Oversight line gets free text when allowance has been met.
- Can restrict voice, messaging, and data services during designated times of day or days of week.

Usage Controls Continued

- Block calls and messages with up to 20 numbers.
- Block calls to 411 Directory Assistance
- Block calls from numbers listed as private, restricted, or unavailable
- Create a list of trusted numbers, wireless or landline.

Smart Lines for Wireless

- AT&T \$4.99 per month.
- Online set up that allows you to:
- Set number of text and instant messages.
- Dollar amount of downloadables.
- Amount of web browsing.
- Times of day the phone can be used.
- Who the phone can call/text incoming and out going.

Family Locator

- Verizon & AT&T \$9.99 per month
- Must have a family share plan
- Locate your families phone from Verizon wireless device or the web.
- Receive scheduled updates of locations.
- Can be used for recurring events (curfews, end of shift)
- Flexible schedule entry, daily, weekly, etc.

Family Locator Continued

- Can be sent to multiple recipients.
- Receive updates when your family member leave or arrive at locations that you define such as school, home, soccer practice.



Trusted Numbers

- \$4.99 per month per line Verizon
- Trusted numbers are numbers that are available for calling and messaging regardless of usage or time restrictions.
- Can contain up to 20 numbers mobile or landlines

Content Filters

- Free from Verizon and AT&T.
- Use Parental Controls to safely allow children to access content that is age appropriate.
- For mobile web devices, music downloads, video down loads, etc.
- Content ratings ages 7+, 13+, 17+.

Using Phone for Alarm Clock

- Many teens say they need to take their phone to bed because they use it as their alarm clock!
- For most phones you are able to turn off all vibrate and noise alerts except for your alarm
- Some phones can turn completely off and will turn back on when it is time for the alarm to ring.

Texting a New Language

BFN = Bye for now BRT = Be right there
PRW = Parents are watching R= are
PRT = Party LOL = Laughing out loud
KOTL = Kiss on the lips

For more text language go to:

Mob1le.com or Netlingo

Internet Resources

- There is a lot of information about cell phone and internet safety on internet!
 - Connectsafely.org
 - OnGuard Online
 - NCPC.org (National Crime Prevention Council)
 - Pewinternet.org

Discussion



Top 50 Popular Text & Chat Acronyms:



1. 2moro - Tomorrow
2. 2nite - Tonight
3. BRB - Be Right Back
4. BTW - By The Way
5. B4N - Bye For Now
6. BCNU - Be Seeing You
7. BFF - Best Friends Forever
8. CYA - Cover Your Ass -or- See Ya
9. DBEYR - Don't Believe Everything You Read
10. DILLIGAS - Do I Look Like I Give A Sh**
11. FUD - Fear, Uncertainty, and Disinformation
12. FWIW - For What It's Worth
13. GR8 - Great
14. ILY - I Love You
15. IMHO - In My Humble Opinion
16. IRL - In Real Life
17. ISO - In Search Of
18. J/K - Just Kidding
19. L8R - Later
20. LMAO - Laughing My Ass Off
21. LOL - Laughing Out Loud -or- Lots Of Love
22. LYLAS - Love You Like A Sister
23. MHOTY - My Hat's Off To You
24. NIMBY - Not In My Back Yard
25. NP - No Problem -or- Nosy Parents
26. NUB - New person to a site or game
27. OIC - Oh, I See
28. OMG - Oh My God
29. OT - Off Topic
30. POV - Point Of View
31. RBTL - Read Between The Lines
32. ROTFLMAO - Rolling On The Floor Laughing My Ass Off
33. RT - Real Time
34. THX or TX or THKS - Thanks
35. SH - Sh** Happens
36. SITD - Still In The Dark
37. SOL - Sh** Out of Luck
38. STBY - Sucks To Be You
39. SWAK - Sealed (or Sent) With A Kiss
40. TFH - Thread From Hell
41. RTM or RTFM - Read The Manual -or- Read The F***ing Manual
42. TLC - Tender Loving Care
43. TMI - Too Much Information
44. TTYL - Talk To You Later -or- Type To You Later
45. TYVM - Thank You Very Much
46. VBG - Very Big Grin
47. WEG - Wicked Evil Grin
48. WTF - What The F***
49. WYWH - Wish You Were Here
50. XOXO - Hugs and Kisses

Common Sense on Social Networking

It's all about hanging with friends — online.

It's 8:30 on a school night — do you know where your child is? Sure, he's at his computer, but if he's like most kids, he's on a social networking site. Do you know what he's doing? It's a whole other world and we'll help you understand (instead of worry) where your kids are hanging out.

Some facts

Sites like Facebook and MySpace have privacy controls.

Some sites require kids to be older than 13 to have a profile, but younger kids set up accounts anyway.

Social networks keep kids connected to friends and provide a space for self-expression.

There are no guarantees of privacy (even with settings) — anything can be cut, pasted, and sent.

Inappropriate pictures, posts, or messages can result in damage to a kid's reputation.

Kids can "tag" (or identify) their friends; this can violate their friends' privacy.

What are social networks?

Social networks are places where kids can hang out together online. These networks range from Club Penguin and Webkinz (for young kids) to MySpace and Facebook. The sites work pretty simply: people who sign up get a profile to post pictures, artwork, and links to songs; write about what they enjoy; and connect with friends. Social networks have become extensions of kids' social lives and wonderful places for self-expression. Social network sites are major communication hubs providing ways for kids to use instant messaging, "friend" one another, and "write on walls" to share public and private thoughts and comments. Social networks also have games, quizzes, and applications that let you do everything from give a virtual hug to buy a friend a virtual beer.

Why social networking matters

Young people today feel a lot of social pressure to use social networking sites. Connecting with friends, creating and sharing photos and videos, and playing games on these sites have all become important parts of kids' lives.

Unless your child uses privacy controls, everything he says about himself in pictures or words will be available for all the world to see. And people do see these pages — strangers, college admissions officers, even potential employers. Kids are savvy enough to post things, but not always mature enough to understand the consequences of doing it.

Even if your kids think they have figured out their privacy controls, there are different ways to get into people's pages. That's why revealing personal information is worrisome.

Parent tips for young kids

- » **Stick with age-appropriate sites.** For kids 5-8, there are sites with strong safety features that help kids play without risking inappropriate content or contact.

Parent tips for middle school kids

- » **Facebook and MySpace won't let kids have sites if they are under 13.** That said, kids simply do the math to figure out what year to put so they'll seem 13 — or older. Check your computer browser histories. If you see either site, then assume your kids have an account.
- » **Tell your kids to think before they post.** Remind them that everything can be seen by a vast, invisible audience (otherwise known as friends of friends of friends). Each family is different, but for middle school kids it's a good idea for parents to have access to their kids' pages, at least at first, to be sure that what is being posted is appropriate. Parents can help keep their children from doing something they will regret later.
- » **Make sure they set their privacy settings.** Privacy settings aren't foolproof, but they're important. Take the time to learn how privacy settings work on your kids' favorite sites, and teach your kids how to control their privacy.
- » **Remind them of the golden rule.** If your children wouldn't want someone saying it to them, they shouldn't say it to anyone else.
- » **Kindness counts.** Lots of sites have anonymous applications like "bathroom wall" or "honesty boxes" that allow users to tell their friends what they think of them. Rule of thumb: If your children wouldn't say it to someone's face, they shouldn't post it.
- » **Go online.** Get an account for yourself. See what kids can and can't do.

Parent tips for high school kids

- » **Talk about the nature of their digital world.** Remind them that anyone can see what's on their pages — even if they think no one will. Potential employers and college admissions people often surf these sites. Ask your teens to think about who might see their pages and how they might interpret the posts or photos.
- » **Set some rules for what is and isn't appropriate for your kids to communicate, play, and post online.** Posts with photos or comments about youthful misbehavior may come back to haunt them.
- » **Let them know that anything they create or communicate can be cut, altered, pasted, and sent around.** Once they put something on their pages, it's out of their control and can be taken out of context and used to hurt your teens or someone else. This includes talk and photos of sex, drugs, and alcohol. Tell them that online stuff can last forever. If they wouldn't put something on the hallway in school, they shouldn't post it on their pages.
- » **If they meet someone, it had better be in a public place, preferably with a friend.** We would all like to think that kids wouldn't meet strangers — but sometimes they do. If your kids want to meet an online friend, let them know that you want to meet that friend, too.
- » **Watch the clock.** Social network sites can be real time suckers. Hours and hours can go by — which isn't great for getting homework done.

Common Sense Media, an independent nonprofit, is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology.



Childproofing: Cyber Safety

A Note from TST BOCES Youth Development

Adults are a powerful influence in the lives of teens and the decisions they make. In October 2010, New York State youth in grades 7-12, including Tompkins county, participated in the NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Youth Development Survey. The survey results clearly show that youth listen to adults, watch their behavior and follow their advice. While this may come as a surprise to some, it reinforces the importance of keeping the doors of communication open with our youth as they enter and navigate their way through the teen years. Talking to our kids about important issues such as safe use of technology and cyber-bullying helps them make positive choices and shows them we care. As parents and guardians, know that you are not alone in creating a safe and caring community for your kids. Please contact the Youth Development staff at any time if you need additional information, support or strategies for talking to teens about their wellness. We can be reached at (607) 257-1551.

Wishing you quality time with your families, and wonderful memories throughout the year!

Sincerely,

Amanda Verba, Jennifer Astles, Amy Cullen,
Meredith DePol, Alicia Grey, & Jennifer Hillman

Parents make a difference!! Survey Says...



Students with clear family rules are less likely to use a cell phone :

- At home or school when he/she was not supposed to.
- To forward rumors or gossip via text message.
- To send or forward embarrassing pictures of someone else.
- To text or forward threats to someone.



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Tips For Talking With Youth:

- **Listen.** Stop what you are doing and look straight in their eyes.
- **Don't lecture.** Kids want quick, factual answers and two way conversations.
- **Negotiate.** Rules should be discussed and consequences negotiated.
- **Read their body language.** Recognize what their non-verbal communication is saying.

See "Discussion Starters" on page 4 for more ideas about how to talk with youth about technology.

Students who did not use a cell phone to send, text, or forward gossip or rumors also reported:

- Lower instances of skipping school
- Less alcohol usage
- Higher academic achievement
- Enjoying school more
- Lower marijuana usage
- Feeling close to their mother and father

91%

Of students surveyed DO NOT use their cell phone to send, text or forward gossip or rumors.



Does Your Child Want a Facebook Account?

Here are some helpful tips for establishing rules, monitoring and protecting your kids on social networking sites like Facebook.

- Have complete access to your child's page. Know your child's password, and do not allow them to change it without your permission.
- Approve all photos/videos before your child uploads them. This includes photos in which your child is "tagged."
- If you don't have a Facebook profile, now is a good time to open an account. Have them help you do this!
- Approve what information your child puts in their profile. This will stop them from giving away too much personal information.
- An email of new posts, added friends, etc. should come to the family's home email address.
- "Friend" your child. This is important because you will then be able to see what they are doing online, and what their friends put on their walls.
- Customize your child's settings to make their profile safer (privacy, visibility, etc.)
- Limit the amount of time your child is allowed to spend on Facebook.

Remember—

You are **NOT** being mean by setting up these rules, these are for your child's **SAFETY**.

Source: www.haltabuse.org Jayne A. Hitchcock (2010)
www.socialmediasorted.com

Cyber-bullying vs. Cyber-harassment

Cyber-bullying:

When a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones

Source: www.stopcyberbullying.org

Cyber-harassment:

Threatening behavior or unwanted advances directed at another using the Internet and other forms of online and computer communications

Source: <http://www.ncvc.org>



NOTE: * Cyber-bullying refers to actions and messages between minors. If one of the people involved in the exchange is an adult, it is cyber-harassment and may have different consequences than cyber-bullying.

Kinds of Cyber-bullying

- **Physical Threats**– Sending messages that involve threats to a person's personal safety.
- **Photoshopping**– Changing digital images so that the person is placed in a compromising or embarrassing situation.
- **Flaming & Trolling**– Sending or posting mean messages intended to “inflamm” the emotions of others.
- **Identity Theft/Impersonation**– Stealing someone's password & taking over their online accounts to send or post incriminating or humiliating pictures, videos or information
- **Happy-Slapping**– Recording someone being harassed or physically bullied, then posting the video online for everyone to see.
- **Rumor Spreading**– Spreading gossip through email, text message, or networking sites.

Source: www.familiesonthego.org

Top 10 Tips for Preventing Cyber-bullying

1. **Establish rules.** All rules for interacting with people in real life also apply for interacting online or through cell phones. Cyber-bullying causes harm & pain in the real world.
2. **Encourage your school to have Internet Safety educational programming.**
3. **Educate your children about appropriate Internet-based behaviors.** It is important for kids to know that misusing technology can hurt their reputation, AND get them in trouble at school and/or with the police.
4. **Model appropriate technology usage.** Don't harass or joke about others while online, especially around your children. Don't text while driving. Your kids are watching and learning.
5. **Monitor your child's activities while they are online.** Actively participate in and supervise your child's online use. It is always a good idea to keep the computer in a living/family room NOT in their bedroom.
6. **Use filtering and blocking software.** Remember, software programs alone will not keep kids safe or prevent them from bullying others or accessing inappropriate content.
7. **Look for warning signs.** If your child becomes withdrawn or their Internet use becomes obsessive, they could either be a victim or a perpetrator of cyber-bullying.
8. **Utilize an “Internet Use Contract” and a “Cell Phone Use Contract”.** This helps create an understanding about what is appropriate when using technology. To remind the child of this pledged commitment, post these contracts in a place where it can easily be seen (e.g., next to the computer).
9. **Cultivate and maintain an open, honest line of communication with your children.** Victims of cyber-bullying (and the bystanders who observe it) need to feel the adult they tell will step in and help in a calm and rational way.
10. **Teach and reinforce positive morals and values.** Especially the importance of treating others with respect and dignity.



Source: www.cyberbullying.us

Discussion Starters: Talking to Your Child About Technology Safety

Video Games

- Can we play some of your favorite games together?
- How do you respond if someone bothers you while you are gaming online?
- How much do you let people know about you while gaming online?
- What kind of people do you game with?
- Do you feel safe while you are gaming online? Why or why not?

Facebook

- Do you have a Facebook account?
- Is your account set to private?
- How often do you post things on Facebook? (if you have a facebook account be "friends" with your child)
- Have you ever been tagged in a picture by someone without your permission?
- Who comments most frequently on your wall or posts?
- What do you do if someone writes something mean about you in a post?



Cell Phones

- What features do you use on your cell phone? Could you show me how to use them?
- Have you ever sent a text that was rude or mean?
- How many numbers do you have stored in your phone? Do you know them all in person?
- Has anyone ever taken an embarrassing picture of you without your permission?
- Have you ever taken an embarrassing picture of someone else? What did you do with it?
- Have you ever talked with someone on your cell phone that you first met online?
- What would you do if someone sent you a text or picture that was inappropriate?

Blogs

- Do you keep a blog? Could I read it?
- Who do you think is reading your blog?
- Would you feel comfortable letting anyone read your blog?
- Is your blog set to private? Why or why not?
- What do you think your blog says about you?

Source: www.netsmartz.org

A cartoon illustration of a young girl with brown hair, wearing a pink shirt, looking down at her smartphone. Around her head are several internet slang terms in pink and purple: "LOL", "imho", "LMAO", "CYALBR", "afalk", "92g", "OMG!", "itw", and "l8rg8r".

More than
1 in 3
youth surveyed spent
3 or more hours a week
socializing on the
Internet

Definitions:

Flaming: An intense argument, that normally takes place in chat rooms, over instant messages or email.

Pseudonym: An online alias or nickname.

Anonymity: When someone makes threatening comments to you, but is able to hide who they are.

Masquerading: An elaborate form of cyberbullying where the bully pretends to be someone who they aren't.

Outing: The public display or forwarding of personal communications such as text messages, emails or instant messaging.

Source: www.cyberbullying.info

Helpful websites

Cyber-bullying Research Center : www.cyberbullying.us

Stop Cyber-bullying: www.stopcyberbullying.org

National Crime Prevention Council: www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying

Stop Bullying: www.stopbullying.gov/topics/cyberbullying

NetSmartz: www.netsmartz.org/cyberbullying

KidsHealth Cyber-bullying: kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/cyberbullying.html



Technology Safety Awareness for Parents of Teens



"What we have learned from observing how kids use the net, mobile phones, gaming devices and other interactive technology is that there really is no distinction between online and offline behaviors. Technology is woven into their lives. They don't go online, they ARE online. So its really about youth safety— not Internet safety."

Larry Magid, co-director of ConnectSafely.org

These sites all aim to provide parents and educators information and tools to assist children and teens gain the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors necessary to use the Internet and other interactive technologies in safe and responsible ways. They have different approaches, articles, activities, family contracts, and guidelines for internet use, social sites, on-line gaming, cell phone use, as well as information on sexual abuse behaviors, cyber bullying and digital dating abuse.

safekids.com

safeteens.com

connectsafely.org

netfamilynews.org

A Parents' Guide to Facebook

coauthored by Larry Magid and Anne Collier, this guide can be found through the safekids.com home page. Provides parents with tools to help their teens (or tweens) optimize privacy and safety on Facebook and is regularly updated.

embracingdigitalyouth.org

Most recent program of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use and Executive Director Nancy Willard. csriu.org is currently still an active site with professional and parent resources.

commonsense.media.org

Nonpartisan, non-profit organization providing information, tools and an independent forum encouraging families to make choices about media as well as technology in their lives.

Interactive for teens and younger children

netsmartz.com

Site run by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Safety information, videos and activities for children from kindergarten to high school.

thatsnotcool.com

Animated site addresses topics such as when texting becomes harassment, pressure to send nude pictures, and cyber privacy. Primarily middle school audience but fun videos work with almost any group.

athinline.org

MTV's digital rights and abuse prevention campaign for teens.

Closely Related Topics

stopitnow.org

Has excellent materials for parents of younger children on child sexual abuse prevention and family safety planning.

respectlove.opdv.ny.gov

loveisrespect.org

thesafespace.org

All three sites, from three different organizations, have information, interactive activities, and videos to help teens recognize, prevent or respond to teen dating abuse. All include material and projects by teens.

sexetc.org

teenwire.org

Sexuality and relationship questions, answers and articles written by teens for teens. Often include questions about sexting, facebook creeping, breaking up online, and technological harassment along with peer pressure, self confidence, teen health.



Advocacy
CENTER



Stop It Now!®

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

PREVENTION TOOLS

Have questions?

Need resources?

Get Help Now!

Online Help Center

<http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>

Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.



351 Pleasant Street
Suite B-319
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: 413.587.3500
Fax: 413.587.3505
www.StopItNow.org
info@StopItNow.org
HelpLine: 1.888.PREVENT

Sexual Safety in Sports: Talking about Coaches Who Show Inappropriate Interest in Kids

Too often, the news carries stories about a bus driver, teacher, or even coach who sexually abused a child, stories that leave us wringing our hands. And yet, how many of us know what to watch out for or how to talk to our child when the risk of sexual abuse is more complicated than the scary guy at the playground offering them candy to get in his car.

To help parents, we've put together tips on how to talk with children and young people about coaches or other adults who show signs of sexual interest in children. Take time to learn to recognize and speak up *before* a child is harmed.

Talk about who sexually abuses children

90% of the time, children and young people are sexually abused by someone they know. Children are most at risk to be abused by someone they have regular contact with including relatives, coaches, teachers, neighbors, babysitters, etc. Use this knowledge when talking about who sexually abuses children. Say, "What if a neighbor asked you to look at some pictures of naked people, what would you do?" Or, "what if the babysitter always comes in the bathroom without knocking? What would you do?" Then talk to them about what they should do and say.

Talk about and help them recognize concerning behaviors.

People who sexually abuse children often show signs before they abuse. While there is no foolproof warning sign, certain behaviors are cause for concern. Talk about why it is important to tell a safe adult if anyone's behavior makes them uncomfortable. Say, "Some people need help if they can't remember the rules for how to behave around kids." Since most of the time children and young people know and often like the person who abuses them, it is helpful to use neutral language like "the rules" rather than talking about "perverts", "predators", etc

Talk about boundaries

People who sexually abuse children may disrespect or ignore a child's personal space or tease or belittle them when they try to set a limit. Sometimes this adult will hug, touch, kiss, tickle, wrestle with, or hold a child even when the child doesn't want this contact or attention. Ask your child to talk with you or a safe adult if this happens to them or to a friend.

Talk about inappropriate behavior between adults and children.

People who sexually abuse children can be more focused on relationships with kids than with other adults. They may turn to a child for emotional or physical comfort or share personal or private information or activities with a child or treat the child more like a peer. They might allow kids to get away with inappropriate behaviors, or point out sexual images or tell dirty or suggestive jokes or talk with them about sexual interactions or images. They might be overly interested in the kids' bodies or their dating relationships. Sometimes they will spend excessive time emailing, text messaging, or calling children or youth. Ask your child to tell you or another safe adult if this happens to them or a friend.



Stop It Now!®

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

PREVENTION TOOLS

Talk about how someone creates opportunities to sexually abuse children.

People who abuse kids often first build a relationship with the child. They may "test" the child to see how the child reacts to different situations. For example, the adult may put their arm around a kid then move to hugging them or asking them to sit on their lap. They might also give a child special treatment like buying them things, giving them special privileges, offering alcohol or drugs or sharing sexual material, explaining that these are their (the adult's and the kid's) special secret.

Talk with your child about these "tricks" and how, because they've enjoyed the extra privileges or attention, it could make it harder for them to tell a safe adult. Tell them, "No matter what, other people aren't allowed to make you uncomfortable by talking with you or touching you in ways that feel uncomfortable or that you don't like. When that happens, tell a safe adult."

Talk about why it is important to tell a safe adult.

Talk with your child about how someone might discourage them from talking to a safe adult. Say, "Sometimes people will scare you by saying Mom or Dad won't believe you or you'll get in trouble or even that it's your fault. But, Mom and Dad will believe you and you won't get in trouble. Sometimes they'll even say they will hurt Mom and Dad or the family pet. We know how to handle these things. We'll be safe and you'll be safer if you tell a safe adult."

Talk about and help them identify 'safe adults'

All children and young people need safe adults they can talk with, in addition to their parents. Ask your child who they would talk to if they had a concern or were worried about something and you weren't available or they weren't comfortable talking with you about this.

If your child can't come up with someone, help them think through who they might consider. If your child mentions someone who you don't trust, talk with them about alternative adults. Say, "I want you to talk with these adults whenever you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused about someone's behavior toward you."

Speak up when you see or experience concerning behavior

If a child reports behaviors that aren't explicitly sexual (for example, someone who gives them the creeps) don't ignore it. At a minimum, talk with the person whose behavior is concerning your child. Don't accuse them. Instead describe the behavior and ask them to stop. Say, "When you do XYZ, Jimmy doesn't like it. Please don't do that any more." If you're uncomfortable talking directly with the person, report your concerns to someone in authority or ask another adult to support you as you talk with the person.

If you observe interactions or behaviors that concern you, speak up. Say, "I'm uncomfortable when you hug Ana after every race. How about high-fiving instead?" If your child suddenly loses interest in an activity they previously enjoyed or tells you they want to quit, consider the possibility that someone has made them uncomfortable or unsafe. Support their "no" while trying to understand what's behind it.

Report anything you know or suspect might be sexual abuse. While some professionals (e.g. teachers, child care providers, etc.) are *legally mandated* to report their concerns about sexual abuse, anyone can make a report if they are concerned a child has been or is at-risk to be sexually abused. If a child tells you about someone touching them or asking them to touch them in a sexual way or showing them sexually explicit photos, report it. In most cases, start by calling your local police. Don't feel you need to have proof. It is not your job to investigate or even to ask for more details. Leave this up to the experts.

It can be hard to imagine someone you or your child knows could be sexually interested in kids. Without certain proof of abuse, it's easy to dismiss such thoughts or think you're overreacting. You may also be worried about the possible consequences of taking action, especially if the concern involves someone known and respected by other people. Remember, your report may prevent other children from being harmed. To learn more, visit www.StopItNow.org.

This article first appeared in the Road Runners Club of America's magazine, Club Running, Winter 2010-2011.

Underage Drinking: The Power of Parents and Communities

Wednesday, April 4, 2012 6:30-8:00 PM

Location: TC3 Forum, Dryden
(use main entrance)



Why do teens drink?
How much do they drink?
Why is it a problem?
And what can we do about it (to keep them safe)?

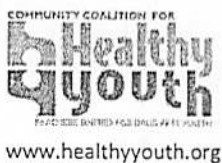


FREE!
All welcome!

Featuring a panel presentation including:

- Overview of underage drinking in Tompkins County
- Stories & experiences of young adults in treatment
- Potential legal consequences to youth & adults
- Transitioning from high school behaviors to college or workforce
- Tips for parents on effective strategies to keep kids safe and alcohol-free
- Audience questions & answers

Sponsored by: Community Coalition for Healthy Youth of
Tompkins County with the assistance of:



U.S. Substance
Abuse & Mental
Health Services
Administration



**DO
YOU
SPEAK
TEEN?**



Community Coalition for Healthy Youth
c/o Tompkins County Youth Services Dept.

320 West State Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 274-5310

www.healthyyouth.org

THINK YOU KNOW YOUR TEEN'S WORLD? THINK AGAIN.

mnE Ps dnt bleev der is a gNR8N d/c b/t em n thr teen. (Text Message Translation: Many parents don't believe there is a generation disconnect between them and their teen.) How much do parents really know about their teen's world? Especially as teens adopt new technologies so quickly?

Test your knowledge about teen life and lingo.

What do "space cakes" and "skittles" have in common?

- a) They are popular snacks
- b) They are sold in many convenience stores
- c) They are harmless-sounding names for drugs
- d) They are sold as high-energy drinks and contain high doses of caffeine

Who have the media dubbed as "prosti-tots"?

- a) Teenage girls who date older guys to get drugs
- b) Scantily dressed teenage girls who emulate young, wild celebrities
- c) Teens who bring more than one date to a party
- d) Drug dealers who are known to deal to children

What is a "poke"?

- a) Making fun of someone over text messaging
- b) A new term for a teen's car
- c) An online form of flirtation on a social networking Web site
- d) A rude way to get someone's attention in class

Find the answers at www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles.

Teens may be a hard study, but knowing more about their world and the influences around them will help you connect better with your teen.

Research shows that parental monitoring is effective in reducing risky behaviors among teens. In fact, teens who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use illicit drugs.¹ And while 80% of parents believe that alcohol and marijuana are not available at the parties their teens attend, 50% of teen partygoers attend parties where alcohol, drugs or both are available.²

There is good news. The majority of teens still report that their parents—not their peers or the media—have the biggest influence on their decision to stay away from alcohol or drugs. Visit www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles to learn more about how parents like you are bridging the gap with their teens and helping to keep them drug-free.

PARENTS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.



Proud Partner of the
National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

¹Metzler, Rusty and Biglan. Community builders for success: monitoring after-school activities. Oregon Research Institute. 1999.

²The National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XI: Teens and Parents. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. August 2006.

ACTION ITEMS FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

These tasks take you a step closer to bridging the generation gap with your teen. To learn more about how parents like you are connecting better with their teens, try these Action Items and report back at www.TheAntiDrug.com/ParentChronicles:

- Pick up your teen's mp3 player and go to the "Top 25 Most Played" section. Listen for references to alcohol, drugs or other risky behaviors. Then talk with your teen about what you heard.
- Visit social networking sites like MySpace.com, and browse the profiles of teens your child's age to see what they say, what their interests are and what they are doing online.
- Can you name your teen's favorite TV show? Watch it with him or her and discuss story lines.
- Go to a video sharing Web site and type in "smoking weed." Watch some of the videos. Did you know that your teen might be exposed to these images?

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GOOD PARENTING MANTRAS FOR KEEPING YOUR TEEN DRUG-FREE

I Will Talk to My Teen About Drugs: Only a third of parents talk to their teens about the risks of using drugs and alcohol, despite research showing that kids are less likely to use if parents have these conversations.

I Will Set Clear “No-Drug” Rules: Telling your teen that drugs and alcohol are not allowed — and outlining the consequences for breaking the rules — are important steps to keeping your child drug-free.

I Will Be More Involved: Teens whose parents are involved in their lives are less likely to use illicit drugs or alcohol, or to be involved in other risky behaviors. Talk to other parents about their rules and level of involvement, too.

I Will Ask the Right Questions: Know what your children are doing when they are away from you, where they go and who their friends are. Know what they do on and offline. And monitor digital activities, too, such as Internet usage, text messaging and social networking sites.

I Will Stay on Top of Emerging Drug Threats: Keep up with what new drug trends teens might be into, such as using prescription drugs to get high. Track quantities of medications in your own home; dispose of old pills safely and properly, and ask others, such as family members, to do the same.

For more advice on keeping your teen drug-free, and to connect with other parents like you, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com.