



SECOND STEP

A Violence Prevention Curriculum

STEPS TO RESPECT

A Bullying Prevention Program

TALKING ABOUT TOUCHING

A Personal Safety Curriculum

WOVEN WORD

Early Literacy for Life

To Learn More

Here are some places to learn more about cyber bullying.

► For Children
[The National Crime Prevention Council](#) (McGruff.org)

A good overview of important rules for children's Internet safety that you and your child can discuss together. It also has a game entitled "Shrink the Bully," which is a helpful teaching tool.

► For Parents
[Committee for Children](#)

Committee for Children has a number of articles about cyber bullying and media safety.

NetSmart

NetSmart is a project of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and offers free, multimedia Internet safety presentations tailored for specific audiences, such as parents and communities, 'tweens, teens, and younger children.

Keeping Youth Cyber-Safe

In just a few weeks, your students will be on winter break. Since it's likely they'll be spending more time online, they may be at increased risk of exposure to cyber bullying, which could adversely affect their emotional and physical health and school performance.

According to Nancy A. Willard, author of [Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats](#), "It is possible that the harm caused by cyber bullying may be even greater than harm caused by traditional bullying." Some of Willard's reasons for this statement are that victims can't escape from the bullying because the Internet is available all the time, it is difficult to remove material from the Internet once it's posted, it is possible to distribute harmful material worldwide, and it is possible to bully anonymously.

Cyber bullying can range from threats, embarrassing or cruel rumors, harassment, and stalking to posting derogatory digital photos. According to a 2006 survey of 1,000 kids by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, one-sixth of all children between the ages of 6 and 11 had mean, threatening, or embarrassing things said about them online.

The good news is that you and your students' parents or guardians can help them become cyber-safe.

How Parents Can Help Children Become "Cyber-Safe"

Here are some topics you might suggest parents talk about with their children before winter break to help protect them from cyber bullying.

Talk about Internet safety

Children need to be just as careful about opening a "cyber door" as they are about opening the front door to strangers. They should never:

- Give out personal information online without a parent or guardian's permission
- Respond to messages that are suggestive, belligerent, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable
- Click on any links in an email from someone they do not know

Explain cyber bullying and what they can do to prevent it

Help children understand that mean people on the Internet can hurt them with words, but that they can be safer if they:

- Don't respond to or forward emails or messages that are mean or spread rumors
- Don't open emails or messages from someone they know bullies others
- Block messages from anyone who cyber bullies
- Save or print all bullying messages
- Show the messages to an adult they trust—like a parent or a teacher—and ask for help (if the first adult they tell doesn't help, they should keep telling until someone does)
- Never arrange to meet someone who is bullying them online

As [Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention](#) advises teachers, cyber bullying can reach a larger number of students than face-to-face bullying, and because it can be done anonymously, targeted students may find it more difficult to respond to or stop the harassment.

When the child is alone, and young, the risk of cyber bullying increases. That's why it is important to help students and parents become more "cyber-safe."

