

# Internet Safety Week

March 14 - 18, 2011

## I CHOOSE TO BE SAFE



Online Safety Week was created in 2005 specifically to generate awareness with children, parents and teachers about the risks and issues of being online.

## This year's theme: Cyber Bullying.

According to a Canadian survey of 10 – 14 year olds, conducted by the Kids Help Phone:

**22%** visited a website they knew their parents would not give permission for,

**20%** said/did something online they later regretted, and

**8%** sent hurtful messages to others.

Source: <http://www.be-free.ca/home/526.html>

## What is Cyber Bullying?

The use of email, cell phone, pager, instant messaging, website or any social networking site to create, promote or support deliberate, hostile behavior or threats towards an individual.

Source: Government of Alberta - Resources Center and <http://www.be-free.ca/home/526.html> and Child Find Alberta.

## KNOW

Bullying is **NOT** a normal part of growing up.  
It is **OK** to report bullying.  
**NO ONE** deserves to be bullied.

## PREVENT

**NEVER** give out or share personal information, including your name, the names of friends or family, your address, phone number or school name.

**BE POLITE** to others online just as you would be in person.

**NEVER** send messages to others when you are angry.

**NEVER** open a message from someone you don't know.

**DON'T REPLY** to messages from cyber bullies.

**TURN OFF, DISCONNECT, UNPLUG.**

Source: Government of Alberta - Resources Center



## PEOPLE WHO ARE CYBERBULLIED MAY:

Feel angry, hurt and anxious.  
Feel like they can't escape the harassment because it can come from many types of technology, not just computers.  
Feel like they may not know who to trust, if they don't know who is bullying them.  
Feel powerless, frustrated, betrayed, afraid, excluded and exposed.

Be surprised at how innocent photos and communication can be altered or sent to anyone.  
Be afraid to tell their parents that they have been Cyberbullied out of shame and fear of losing access to technology they use to communicate with friends.  
Have low self-esteem and high levels of depression.

Source: <http://www.be-free.ca/home/526.html>



### WHAT DID I DO WRONG?

Being bullied is NOT your fault.  
People who are bullied feel ashamed and angry.  
You need to know that you are NOT alone.

## CYBER BULLYING IS HAPPENING TO ME...NOW WHAT?

Guard your information. Don't give people you don't know your cell phone number, Instant Messaging name or e-mail addresses. Never share your passwords or any other identifying information (like where you go to school).

If you're being harassed online, immediately:

TELL an adult you trust.  
STOP the activity.  
BLOCK the sender's messages. Never reply to harassing messages.  
SAVE and record any harassing messages and forward them to law enforcement.  
If the bullying involves threats, tell the police.

**You have the power and knowledge to STOP CYBER BULLYING!**

Do you need HELP?

Child Abuse Hotline  
1.800.387.KIDS (5437)  
Child Disability Resource Link  
1.866.346.4661  
Family Violence Info Line  
310.1818 (toll free, 24/7)  
Kids Help Phone  
1.800.668.6868

Source: Government of Alberta - Resources Center and <http://www.be-free.ca/home/526.html>

# Internet Safety - Resource for Parents

The Internet could be a great resource for children. They can use the internet for school projects, to communicate with teachers and friends, and play interactive games. As parents, we need to realize that our children's generation is different from ours. Today most children, teens and younger adults have adopted cyberculture as part of their life style.

## WE HAVE EMBRACED CYBERCULTURE

But what is Cyberculture? We could define cyberculture in many different ways, but in simple terms, cyberculture is forming relationships directly mediated by the computer through the internet.

In cyberculture, like any culture, we establish identity and credibility. This is a clear definition of how Social Networking Sites work. However, because of lack of direct physical interaction in cyberculture, such identities and credibility can be compromised.

It is important to communicate to our children that the internet is a public place that can be used for good or bad.

## WHAT WE ARE FACING

**Instant Messaging** – Internet programs where children have a profile, which contains personal information that can be shared with a list of buddies. Instant messaging allows you to live chat with anyone in your list, share personal information, pictures and more. It also allows you to use a live webcam.

Example of Instant Messaging Sites – MSN Messenger and Yahoo Messenger.

**Social Network** – Internet social structure made up by individual profiles that are connected with each other based on similar interests. The primary focus of any social network is to create relations among created identities. When signing up for a social network, it is required to create a profile, including your full name, birth date and location. These sites allow you to share all kinds of details regarding yourself, such as who your family members and friends are, what your specific location is, details about your school or job, personal interests and images among many others.

Example of Social Network Sites – Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Nexopia, Hi5.

**Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG)** - A gender role-playing video games in which a very large number of players interact with one another within a virtual game world. MMORPG has no limits, as they are played all over the world, again, with a created identity.

Players assume the role of a character (often in a fantasy world) and take control over many of that character's actions. As this character plays, his/her fantasy world continues to exist and evolve events while the player is away from the game, causing a constant need in the player to be online in the fantasy world.

Examples of MMORPG Games: World of Warcraft.

**Video Games Live** – Electronic games that involve interaction with other users to generate visual feedback on a video device.

These video games must be connected to the internet to become 'live' and allow multiple players to interact together online. While playing live, players create a profile containing a name and other personal information, such as location and picture. Players can also talk to each other, and no history of these conversations can be saved.

Example of Video Games Live: Playstation, Nintendo, Wii and Xbox Live.

**Chat Rooms** – Websites, part of websites, or part of an online service that provides a venue for communities of users with a common interest to communicate in real time.

Chat room users register for the chat room of their choice, choose a user name and password, and log into a particular room. Inside the chat room, generally there is a list of the people currently online. Because chat room messages are spontaneous and instantly visible, there is a potential for online abuse. Most chat rooms have age limitations but no one could stop you from lying about your age.

Example: MSN Messenger, ICQ, Yahoo Messenger.

**Skype** – This is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls over the Internet.

Registered users of Skype are identified by a unique 'Skype Name', which may be listed in the Skype directory. Skype allows these registered users to communicate through both instant messaging and voice chat. Skype's text chat allows group chats, storing chat history, offline messaging (since version 5) and editing of previous messages.

Some network administrators have banned Skype on corporate, government, home, and education networks, citing reasons such as inappropriate usage of resources, excessive bandwidth usage, and security concerns.

**YouTube** – Video sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos. Unregistered users may watch videos, and registered users may upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos that are considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users 18 and older.

YouTube, as many websites and social networking sites, contains privacy policies and statements to protect users; unfortunately these rules could easily not be followed when lying about personal information.

## WHAT COULD HAPPEN

Throughout the sites listed above and many others, our children could:

Be exposed to sexually explicit material.

Experiment with Identity Play roll by creating truthful or false profiles with personal information in order to fit within their group of friends.

Develop cyber relationships with strangers who are not who they say they are.

Be exploited by a virtual individual or group of people, through verbal, written or imaging communication.

Be cyberbullied by an individual or group of people over the internet. Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, and repeated hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and/or threat with aggression. When bullying escalates, it might lead to a feeling of terror on the part of the individual being bullied.

Source: Government of Alberta - Resources Center

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AS PARENT

**Learn.** Understand what your children are doing online. Watch and learn about what sites they frequent and how these sites interact with other users and how they share personal information. Learn how privacy setting work for those sites, sometimes signing up is the best way to learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't fully understand the various features of the websites.

**Talking is good.** Create an environment that allows for an open and honest relationship with your children. Make sure that if your child needs to talk to you about something personal, they feel comfortable telling you. Don't react in a negative manner if they share information that is upsetting or concerning. If they feel they are going to be blamed, they will not feel comfortable sharing, even if they are not at fault.

**Boundaries work.** Create online boundaries and limits for your child about what they post online and who they talk to. Involve them directly in setting these parameters so they understand why they have been created, and will be more likely not to break the rules.

**This is not a onetime deal.** Frequently view your child's profiles, email accounts, instant messaging history and text messaging blogs. Engage them about what they have online. Some children do not realize that once you share something on the internet they lose complete control over that information. Once their information or pictures are online, it can be there forever.

**Don't let it pass.** Be aware of any new people that have come into your child's life recently that you do not know very well. Ask your child more about this person, and find out who they are. By talking to your child about their online connections, you can ensure both of you know who these people are, and if necessary can be deleted or blocked from making contact with your child again.