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Avoiding Cyber Bullying

Don't give out personal information.

- This includes your name, phone number, address, email address, the name of your school, names of family members, pictures of yourself, and so on.
- Never tell anyone your passwords or personal identification numbers (PINs).

Pause and think twice before you send messages.

- Think about how you can't get the message back once you've sent it.
- Ask yourself these questions:
 - Could the message make you vulnerable to bullying because it is very personal, potentially embarrassing, or revealing?
 - Could the message get you in trouble if an adult saw it?
 - How might other people feel when they read this message?
- Realize that anything you send out electronically could potentially be sent to everyone you know and many more people you don't know.

Avoid saying anything in an electronic message that you wouldn't say to someone's face.

Do not forward gossip or hurtful or threatening messages.

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Responding to Cyber Bullying

If it's happening to you:

Document cyber bullying.

Save any harassing, threatening, bullying, or sexually inappropriate messages and show them to an adult. Make sure the adult saves the messages.

Report cyber bullying.

- Tell a trusted adult right away.
- Inform your Internet service provider or cellphone service provider of the problem, if necessary.
- Inform your school administration if you know that the problem involves schoolmates.
- Inform the police if the problem involves harassment, threats, or sexually inappropriate content.

Do not write back aggressively to someone who is cyber bullying.

- Even if someone else “started it,” you could become “part of the problem” by responding in an aggressive way to cyber bullying messages.
- Check your computer/phone for the ability to block messages from the person doing the bullying.

Never arrange to meet someone who is bullying online.

Remember, do not blame yourself if you receive bullying or inappropriate messages! Other people's cruel or illegal behavior is not your fault.

If you're a bystander:

Offer support to someone who is being cyber bullied.

- Acknowledge that the bullying is unfair.
- Encourage the person being bullied to report it.

Do not forward gossip or hurtful or threatening messages.