





## Prevent bullying: give children a childhood they'll want to remember

*Traditional bullying (t-bullying):* physical or verbal aggression that is intentional, control-based and usually repeated over time; directed towards a peer or someone younger than the bully; includes taunts, threats, hitting, shunning, and intimidating gestures.

*Cyber-bullying (c-bullying):* willful and repeated emotional harm inflicted on a peer through the computer, cell phone, social networking sites, and other electronic devices; includes spreading rumors through mass email; posting inaccurate and biased comments on social networking sites; sending emails that humiliate or encourage mockery of another.

C- bullying is different from t-bullying because it can take place anytime, anywhere outside of the presence of the target; c-bullying involves a “virtual world” of onlookers who join in or are silent bystanders; c-bullying can be repeated several times in one day with the click of a mouse.

### How to spot a target:

- Afraid to go to school or youth group, ride the school bus or car pool; doesn't enjoy activities with peers; avoids peers that he or she used to hang around
- Reluctant to answer the phone, open email, or join social networking sites
- Tries to please peers including actions that humiliate the target.

### How to spot a bully:

- Acts secretly while using the phone or computer
- Changes password or puts a locking device on the computer so parents or teachers cannot access his or her communications
- Speaks in derogatory tone toward one person or group of people
- Deletes messages or pictures when a parent or teacher enters the room
- Isolates a peer or younger person to interact with him or her

### Intervention with bullying

- Monitor computer usage and the sites that students or youth use
- Become a bully-free environment at school or church through training, role-modeling of appropriate interactions and problem-solving skills, and developing a *Respect Policy*
- Encourage group activities for all youth to participate in; closely supervise such activities
- Enforce consequences for bullying behavior when it is reported
- In severe cases, seek the assistance of an internet service provider (ISP) to uncover the source of c-bullying

Additional resource: “Preventing Bullying: the Church’s Obligation”, by Jessie Schut, appears in *Preventing Child Abuse: creating a safe place*, Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2009, pp 85-99.



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