

Tips for Dealing with Cyberbullying Incidents

- Consider not responding to a provocative or offensive e-mail, especially if it is more in the nature of a prank or mild teasing. The sender is often looking for a reaction and he/she is likely to simply stop if there is no response. It isn't easy to ignore a hurtful comment directed at you, but a response in kind risks your becoming caught up in an online confrontation that can quickly spin out of control.
- If you are angry and determined to counter an offensive post, take a break to cool down before you respond. If you answer while in the throes of anger, you run the risk of falling into the trap of becoming a cyberbully yourself. Make sure to review what you have written before you press the send button, avoiding language that inflames the situation. Once you have sent a response, it is too late to take it back. A non-confrontational response might be to simply say "stop" to the sender of the original message.
- If the person continues to send you upsetting messages despite your requests that he/she stop, terminate the online relationship. This might mean leaving a chat room or blocking the person from communicating with you. By accessing the blocking feature provided by most Internet Service Providers, the cyberbully will not know when you are online or be able to contact you through the web site.

- Consider changing your e-mail address if someone persists in sending you harassing e-mails.
- If your efforts to terminate the online relationship are unsuccessful and the person continues to harass you, talk with an adult who may have other ways of dealing with the cyberbullying. These other options include contacting the Internet Service Provider (or cell phone provider if it the messages are sent by text) as well as law enforcement officials. If you do pursue one of these options, it will be important for you to save the offensive messages that have been sent to you, noting the date and time of the messages.
- If you have received threats online, contact an adult immediately. These threats may warrant your parents contacting the police.