

Cyberbullying Investigation and Intervention

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Set the Stage

- Have a team in place - principal, counselor/psychologist, technology coordinator, and school resource officer.
- Make sure students know they can report anonymously or confidentially - and that you need the URL.
- Make sure every member of team can achieve an immediate bypass of the filter to investigate a report.

Investigation

Evidence Gathering

- Preserve **all** evidence. Your technology coordinator can assist with this.
- Determine the identity of cyberbully(ies).
- Search for additional harmful material or interactions.
 - It might be appropriate to conduct analysis of all involved students through District Internet system.
 - Ask about related on-campus actions.

Review the Material

- Review the material looking for insight into the harmful relationships. Determine:
 - Who is causing harm to whom at school and online? Watch for continuation or retaliation.
 - Who is assisting or supporting the harm?
 - Who is defending the person being harmed or trying to get the harm to stop?
- Ask: Does evidence gathered raise concerns that any student(s) may pose a risk of harm to others or self?
 - Recognize that the threat of harm may come from student(s) who posted the material or from student(s) who were victimized.
- Gain insight from student who has reported.

Discussions with Target(s)

- Discuss relationship issues at school to develop a plan of action to resolve.
 - This may include the need to address issues caused by the target.
- If "hostile environment" at school make sure the environment ~ and your protective responses ~ are documented.
 - Written report by a school or community counselor or psychologist. Written or documented statement by the target and parent. School performance and attendance reports.
 - Retain all materials so they can be reviewed for a professional opinion.
 - Document your ongoing protection responses.

Intervention

Imminent Threat

- If the speech appears to present an imminent threat, contact law enforcement and initiate a protective response.
 - But continue with evidence gathering.
 - Watch out for the possible alternatives.

Take-Down

- Get the harmful materials taken down as rapidly as possible. Take down contacts:
 - MySpace ~
 - Facebook ~ abuse@facebook.com or
 - YouTube ~
 - Others ~ look on home page or page material is on for "complaint," "abuse," or "contact."

Discussions with Aggressor(s)

- The primary objective is to get students to the point of feeling remorse and shame - not anger.
 - Ask about, listen to, and develop a plan to address challenges the aggressor is facing can increase the potential of a successful resolution.
- Ask questions that can lead to remorse focusing on harmful consequences and damage to reputation.
- Ask the student what actions he or she proposed should be taken to remedy the harm.
 - Students will be highly motivated to avoid parental restrictions on online access, therefore motivated to engage in reparations
 - Remedial actions will be "healing" for the target and reduce the potential for retaliation.
- In some circumstances direct mediation of involved students may be effective.

Formal Discipline

- A formal disciplinary response may be justified if speech has or could cause:
 - Hostile environment.
 - Violent altercations.
 - Substantial interference with instruction/operations.
- Impose a reasonable disciplinary consequence
 - Take into account the degree of remorse and actions to remedy the harm.
- Fully document the evidence, decision-making process, and rationale.