

# Digital Citizenship

## Being digitally smart

Once it's out there, it's out there. Anything you post, forward, or send can be copied and posted, forwarded, and sent.

Colleges and employers research you. Google yourself. See what comes up. That is your digital footprint. Imagine what a college Admissions Counselor or Human Resources hiring director thinks when they see what your digital footprint looks like. Are you the kind of person they would want at their school or place of business?

For teens, we offer five simple rules of digital citizenship to help them create a world they can be proud of -- and inspire others to do the same.

**Think before you post or text -- a bad reputation could be just a click away.** Before you press the "send" button, imagine the last person in the world that you'd want seeing what you post.

**What goes around comes around.** If you want your privacy respected, respect others' privacy. Posting an embarrassing photo or forwarding a friend's private text without asking can cause unintended hurt or damage to others.

**Spread heart, not hurt.** If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Stand up for those who are bullied or harassed, and let them know that you're there for them.

**Give and get credit.** We're all proud of what we create. Illegal downloading, digital cheating, and cutting and pasting other people's stuff may be easy, but that doesn't make it right. You have the responsibility to respect other people's creative work -- and the right to have your own work respected.

**Make this a world you want to live in.** Spread the good stuff. Create, share, tag, comment, and contribute to the online world in positive ways.

### Rules of the Road for Kids

1. **Guard your privacy.** What people know about you is up to you.
2. **Protect your reputation.** Self-reflect before you self-reveal. What's funny or edgy today could cost you tomorrow.
3. **Nothing is private online.** Anything you say or do can be copied, pasted, and sent to gazillions of people without your permission.
4. **Assume everyone is watching.** There's a huge, vast audience out there. If someone is your friend's friend, they can see everything.
5. **Apply the Golden Rule.** If you don't want it done to you, don't do it to someone else.
6. **Choose wisely.** Not all content is appropriate. You know what we mean.
7. **Don't hide.** Using anonymity to cloak your actions doesn't turn you into a trustworthy, responsible human being.
8. **Think about what you see.** Just because it's online doesn't make it true.
9. **Be smart, be safe.** Not everyone is who they say they are. But you know that.

Knorr, Caroline. "Be a Good Digital Citizen: Tips for Teens and Parents." *Reviews and Ratings for Family Movies, TV Shows, Websites, Video Games, Books and Music*. Common Sense Media, 13 Dec. 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2013.

Perle, Liz. "Internet Safety: Rules of the Road for Kids." *Reviews and Ratings for Family Movies, TV Shows, Websites, Video Games, Books and Music*. Common Sense Media, 10 May 2010. Web. 20 Aug. 2013.

## What is it?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Kids who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior.

- Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

"What Is Cyberbullying." *Home*. US Dept. of Health & Human Services, n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2013.

# Cyberbullying

76% of people ages 14-24 say that digital abuse is a serious problem.

Compared to 2009, young people in 2011 were significantly more likely to step in if they saw someone "being mean online."

Some of the most frequent forms of digital harassment include people writing things online that aren't true (26%), people writing things online that are mean (24%), and someone forwarding an IM or message that was intended to stay private (20%).

Digital abuse isn't generally the act of strangers -- perpetrators are usually people the victims know well.

(All of the above are from the 2011 AP-MTV Digital Abuse study)

Knorr, Caroline. "When Texting Turns to Torment." *Reviews and Ratings for Family Movies, TV Shows, Websites, Video Games, Books and Music*. Common Sense Media, 1 Mar. 2012. Web. 20 Aug. 2013.

## Cyberbullying and Carteret County Schools

Cyberbullying can create a disruptive environment at school and is often related to in-person bullying. The school can use the information to help inform prevention and response strategies.

Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages.

Keep evidence of cyberbullying. Record the dates, times, and descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred. Save and print screenshots, emails, and text messages. Use this evidence to report cyberbullying to web and cell phone service providers.

Block the person who is cyberbullying.

Report any cyberbullying to Officer Foster. Some cases may be prosecuted by the Sheriff's Department in addition to school punishment.

"Report Cyberbullying." *Home*. US Dept. of Health & Human Services, n.d. Web. 20 Aug. 2013.