

# HARLINGEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE  
2016-0091

HONOR    ◆    COURAGE    ◆    INTEGRITY

## CYBER-BULLYING

Home is no longer the escape or safe-haven it once was for victims of bullying. Bullies now have the ability to stalk and harass their victims after school hours, on weekends and breaks. Bullies have long been using social isolation, public humiliation and malicious gossip to torment others. Now with high-speed computers, tablets, and smart phones, Bullies can message instantly to millions dramatically increasing their powers of manipulation. Cyber-Bullying can be as simple continually sending e-mails to someone who has indicated that they want no further contact, but may also include threats, sexual remarks, hate speech or other forms of humiliation. Children have killed each other and committed suicide as a result of Cyber-Bullying. The following are some examples of Cyber-Bullying;

- **Instant Messaging / Text Messaging Harassment:** Cyber-Bullies may send hateful or threatening messages.
- **Web Sites:** Cyber-Bullies may create websites specifically designed to insult another kid or group.
- **Sending Threatening pictures, porn, and instant messaging** through e-mail & cell phones.
- **Stealing passwords:** A cyber-Bully may steal victims passwords and change the profile (to include racist, sexual, and inappropriate content)
- **Sending Malicious Code:** Many Cyber-Bullies will send viruses, spyware and hacking programs to their victims.
- **Impersonation:** Cyber-Bullies may pose as the victim and post provocative messages in a chat-room inviting attacks. The Cyber-Bully often gives out the victim's name, address and telephone number.
- **Blogs:** Cyber-Bullies sometimes use blogs to damage other kids' reputation or invade their privacy.
- **Internet Poling:** Who's hot? Who's not? Who is the biggest loser? These types of questions (polls) run rampant on internet polls created by teens.
- **Interactive Gaming:** Gaming devices allow kids to communicate by chat and live internet phone with anyone gaming on-line. Participants may verbally abuse other kids, using threats and lewd language.

Kids who Cyber-bully others are often motivated by anger, revenge or frustration. Cyber-Bullies may also be motivated by the entertainment value, the re-action from the victim, accidental, the enjoyment of tormenting others, or in defending themselves against traditional bullying.

The best way to deal with Cyber-Bullying is first do not respond to the attacks. You should not reply to e-mails, posts or text messages, because that is what the Bully wants. Do not delete information related to a Cyber-Bully attack. The information will be useful to the Police in tracking the culprit. Report Cyber-Bullying to your local Law Enforcement Agency and the Schools. Always be aware of what your children are doing on the internet.

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