A FEW THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CYBERBULLYING...

The instant access that cell phones and the Internet provide means that children need to use common sense when it comes to cyber communication. This includes knowing how to handle cyberbullies who use text, email, voice, and instant messages, as well as photos to embarrass, insult, and unnerv e kids.

A 2007 study of approximately 2,000 middle school students in grades 6 through 8 found that 42.9% of them had at least one of the following experiences in the last 30 days:

- received an email or an instant message that made them upset
- had something posted on a social networking site that made them upset
- had been made fun of in a chat room
- had something posted on a Web site that made them upset
- had something posted online that they did not want others to see
- were afraid to go on the computer

About the same number of students reported being victims of cyberbullying as being bullies—17%

Source: www.cyberbullying.us

REVIEW THESE ADDITIONAL TIPS WITH YOUR CHILD:

- Program family phone numbers into your phone for easy access.
- If there is an emergency, don’t wait, call 9-1-1 (or your local emergency number).
- Remember that photos you send stay online forever and can be sent to anyone.
- Follow the rules about cell phone use. Cell phones shouldn’t be used in some places.
Tips for Talking, Texting, and Sending Messages

- **Send** appropriate text, email, or picture messages only.
- **Do not give out** your address or other personal information on a phone call, text, or email to people you don’t know, or if others can hear you.
- **Do not respond** to an email, text, picture, or voice message from someone you don’t know.
- **Tell an adult** you trust if you receive anything on your phone—a call, a text message, an email, a picture, or voicemail message—that makes you uncomfortable.
- **Be aware** of your surroundings and understand when talking or texting is appropriate and when it is not.

The more advanced cellular devices become, the more functions they have available. Sending pictures over the Internet is something that children do all the time. Photo-messaging on cell phones is no different. Children need to be aware why all pictures are not appropriate to send. They also need to know that if they receive a message or image that makes them uncomfortable, they should immediately tell you or another trusted adult.

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**Family Contract for Responsible Cell Phone Use**

**Child:**

I will follow all school rules about cell phones.

I will answer my phone if my parent calls, or return the call immediately if I’m in a restricted use area.

I will not use my phone to share photos that could embarrass me or others.

I will not share photos of other people without their permission.

I will not talk or send text messages about people in a way that hurts them or their reputation.

I will not pass along or give any other support to a hurtful message sent to me about someone else.

I will not download, add, or subscribe to anything on my phone without my parents’/guardians’ permission.

I will not disable any parental controls on my phone.

If I’m uncomfortable with messages on my phone, I’ll talk to my parents/guardians about it.

I will not talk or text with anyone I don’t know; I will tell my parents if a stranger keeps trying to contact me.

I will not use my phone to arrange meetings with anybody I don’t know.

I will stay within my plan’s usage limits and review my usage with a parent/guardian if I go over those limits.

**Parent/Guardian:**

I will periodically talk with my child about using a cell phone.

I will not take away my child’s cell phone if my child comes to me about a problem concerning content or contact on a phone unless my child is in danger or has disregarded family rules. Instead, we will work together to try to solve the problem and to make sure my child makes good choices.

I will set reasonable consequences if any of the above rules are broken.

I will periodically revisit these rules as my child matures and cell phone technology evolves.

Other terms your family wants to add:

__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

We have talked about and understand the terms and consequences of this contract and promise to honor them.

Signed: _______________________________________

__________________________________________

(Date)  
(Child)  
(Parent/Guardian)