

IDENTIFYING & REPORTING BULLYING

It is important to understand the dangers regarding bullying, cyberbullying, and digital abuse, as well as related indicators, because students often do not report these behaviors.

- » 1 in 4 kids will be bullied, and 1 in 5 will be cyberbullied.
- » 1 in 3 teens consider the Internet as important as air, water, food and shelter, yet most are not provided with digital safety information to help protect them.

Indicators of Bullying

Physical

- » Frequent cuts or bruises
- » Injuries without good explanation
- » Voices frequent physical complaints
- » Changes in sleeping/eating patterns
- » Ripped/torn clothing upon return from school
- » Missing items or valuables

Behavioral/Emotional

- » Suddenly reluctant to go to school
- » Frequently loses lunch money or other possessions
- » Frequently spends time alone
- » Seems sad or depressed
- » Suicidal

Digital/Cyberbullying

- » Spends large amounts of time online, especially at night or when alone
- » Receives an excessive amount of email or text messages
- » Quickly exits computer or cell phone when parent or guardian approaches
- » Withdrawn or depressed
- » Does not want to go to school

Bullying is repeated acts of hostility or aggression where there is a real or perceived imbalance of power and the victim cannot defend himself or herself. There are 4 types of bullying:

- » Physical
- » Verbal
- » Social / Isolation
- » Digital

Cyberbullying is repeated, threatening or harassing behavior that occurs online via the Internet or cellphone and can include:

- » Sending harassing messages
- » Posting false information
- » Posting private pictures
- » Gaining someone's trust to impersonate them and post their private information online

Digital Abuse and Digital Dangers come in the form of online predators seeking and grooming children for sexual abuse, as well as:

- » **Gaming/Virtual Reality:** 97% of kids play computer, online, portable or console games, and of those, 27% play with strangers they meet online. There is also a lot of sexual content on games/virtual reality sites.
- » **Sexing:** Approximately 20% of teens are sending or receiving nude/revealing photos or texts on cell phones.
- » **Apps:** Apps pose many dangers to kids and most do not realize the dangers of agreeing to app policies, access to personal content, etc.

Protecting Children and Teens

Be informed about risks and educate students about bullying prevention and intervention, including being empathetic toward others and being an Upstander. Teach them about digital dangers and digital safety. Report digital abuse and exploitation to local law enforcement or to the CyberTipline at **1-800-843-5678**. To learn more, visit **www.mbfpreventioneducation.org**, **www.publicandpermanent.com**, or **Gulfcoastkidshouse.org** or call (850) 595-5800.