Education Week Webinar

When Cyberbullying Spills Into School

Free Webinar:
Thursday, Feb. 23, 2012
2 to 3 p.m. ET

Sponsored by
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When Cyberbullying Spills Into School

Expert Presenters:

Nancy Willard, executive director, Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use

Barbara-Jane Paris, principal, Canyon Vista Middle School in Austin, Texas
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Addressing Cyberbullying in a Positive and Restorative Manner

Nancy Willard
Embracing Digital Youth
Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use
Why is this Important?

- Digital aggression
  - Leads to violence at schools
  - Causes students not to feel safe coming to school
  - Interferes with the ability of students to be successful learners
Ensure schools have the legal authority to respond

Ensure principals and others know how to effectively respond
Adult Involvement

- Adults generally are not in a position to supervise
- Students often do not report to adults
Youth Involvement

- Vast majority of young people do not like to see hurtful behavior
- Hurtful digital communications are often visible to peers
Implement peer-based prevention and intervention
Consider use of digital reporting systems
Harmful Incidents

- Could be
  - Continuation
  - Retaliation
  - Mutual conflict
  - Impersonation
Targeting Staff

- Students who do not target staff
  - Are happy & successful
  - Feel they are respected by staff
  - Think they are receiving a quality education

- If a student has targeted staff this is "red flag" something is wrong
Engage in a complete and objective investigation looking at the role of all parties
Intervention

- School responses to bullying often are not effective
- Increased risk of anonymous digital retaliation
Shift from ineffective punitive responses to restorative interventions that will address harm and keep all students successfully engaged in school.
Issues to Address

- Cyber Savvy Objectives
- Legal Issues
- Comprehensive Approach
- Effective Investigations
- Restorative Interventions
Cyber Savvy
Cyber Savvy Youth

● Keep Themselves Safe

  ▸ They understand the risks and they know how to avoid getting into risky situations, to detect whether they are at risk, and to effectively respond
Cyber Savvy Youth

- Present a Positive Image
  - They present themselves online as someone who make positive choices

What you do reflects on you!
Cyber Savvy Youth

- Respect Others
  - They respect the rights, privacy, and property of others and treat others with civility
Cyber Savvy Youth

- Take Responsibility for the Well-being of Others
  - They help others and report serious concerns to a responsible adult
Legal Issues
When does a school official have the authority to respond to student off-campus speech?
School officials have the authority to respond to student off-campus speech if it has, or reasonably could, cause a substantial disruption in school or interference with rights of other students.
In Other Words

- Schools must balance students’ free speech rights against students’ rights to be safe and receive an education
  - Not whether student has challenged school authority
  - Not whether speech is offensive or contrary to educational mission
Substantial Disruption

- Threat of violence
- Significant interference with delivery of instruction
- Hostile environment for a student
  - Subjective and objective perspective
Due Process

- Students should have notice that school will respond to off-campus speech
  - Is this included in state statute?
  - Is this included in district policy?
- Even if not in state statute, include in district policy
Address Concerns

- About adding off-campus speech
  - Does not require schools to monitor
  - Only imposes restrictions on student free speech to protect other students’ rights
  - Does not interfere with parents’ rights because focus is on harmful impact at school ~ not family values
What is the district’s responsibility to respond?
Harmful digital interactions can create a hostile environment

- Statutory responsibility to respond
- If "situation" has created a hostile environment and school officials have actual knowledge, lack of response could possibly be considered "deliberate indifference"
District Responsibility

- Does NOT mean school officials have an obligation to monitor student’s off-campus actions
  - Is impossible
  - Would violate student privacy
  - Is not the school’s job
When can student digital records be searched?
Search and Seizure

- What is expectation of privacy in different situations?
  - Student use of district Internet
  - Student’s personal digital device
  - Digital device used for instruction
Search and Seizure

- Who is searching?
  - School official requires “reasonable suspicion”
  - Police officer requires “probable cause”
Questions

- When does search standard shift?
- Can students refuse consent?
- Should students be advised of right to refuse consent?
- If used instructionally, how can teachers monitor and student’s personal records be protected?
When can students sue other students and their parents for harm caused by hurtful digital actions?
Civil Law Remedies

- Defamation
- Public disclosure of private facts
- False light
- Intentional infliction of emotional distress
When are harmful digital actions criminal violations?
Criminal Laws

- Threats or extortion
- Cyberharassment
- Cyberstalking
- Hate crimes
- Child pornography
- Sexual exploitation
- Invasion of privacy
Comprehensive Approach
Foundation

- Ensure multidisciplinary collaboration
- Build on a social-emotional intelligence program
- Engage in needs assessment
- Evaluate effectiveness
Policies & Practices

- Engage in a review of policies and practices
  - Filter bypass
  - Off-campus speech
  - Cyberthreats
  - Sexting
  - Cell phones & imaging devices
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Digital reporting
Outreach

• Provide professional development
• Provide parent outreach
• Provide community outreach
Education

- Provide student education in a constructive instruction manner
  - Positive norms
  - Effective skills, including conflict resolution
  - Helpful allies
Role of Students

- Infuse students into the “Risk Prevention Triangle”
  - Tertiary ~ Encourage helpful allies to report serious concerns to adults
  - Secondary ~ Provide skills and encourage helpful allies to help
  - Primary ~ Transmit positive social norms and effective skills to all
Effective Investigation
Gather Evidence

- Preserve digital evidence
- Determine identities
  - Ask lesser involved students
  - Law enforcement may help
- File abuse report to get hurtful material taken down
Review the Situation

- Who is engaged in aggression against whom?
- Why?
  - Continuation
  - Retaliation
  - Mutual conflict
Review the Situation

- What is happening at school?
  - If a staff member has been targeted, what is going on in relationship with student?

- Is there evidence of the potential of violence or self-harm?
Punishment

- Punishment-based approach asks
  - Who did it?
  - What “rule” was broken?
  - How should the offender be punished?

- Increasing recognition that punishment is not an effective response to hurtful behavior
Restoration

- Addresses needs of target, aggressor & community
- Gives targets a voice
- Holds aggressors accountable
- Provides opportunity for amends
- Encourages reconciliation
- Restores relationships
Ask These Questions

- What is the harm to each person and to the community?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm?
- Who is responsible for this repair?
- What needs to occur to prevent similar harm in the future?
Objectives for Aggressor

- Acknowledge that actions caused harm
- Understand harmful impact as experienced by others
- Assume personal responsibility for behavior
Objectives for Aggressor

- Take steps to make amends and repair harm
- Enunciate an intent to make changes in so the harm will be unlikely to happen again
Recommendations

- Less formal process when
  - Aggressor quickly acknowledges harm & desire to remedy

- More formal process when
  - More serious situations
  - Situations involving staff
  - Recalcitrant aggressor
Distressed Students

- Develop a plan of action to address emotional distress
- Discuss sources of strength
  - Family support, friends, community support, healthy activities, counseling
  - Make specific plan of action to tap into these sources
Evaluation

- Request feedback from all parties involved
- Evaluate to determine effectiveness and need for continuing or corrective actions
- Conduct aggregated analysis to inform district efforts
Resources & Projects

http://embracingdigitalyouth.org
Resources

- New book: Cyber Savvy Embracing Digital Safety and Civility
- Knowledge Delivery Systems online courses
- Embracing Digital Youth Network Webinars
What I Am Working On

- Online Survey for Schools
  - To assess norms, practices, incidents
  - To be used for needs assessment, instruction, and evaluation

- Be a Friend ~ Lend a Hand
  - To provide skills and encourage helpful allies
What I Am Working On

- Guidelines for School Leaders
  - Investigation
  - Restorative interventions
  - Evaluation of effectiveness
Thanks for Having Me

What you do reflects on you!
Talk About It®
Anonymous Communication Service

• Launched in 2005; serves hundreds of thousands of students in K12 as well as mental health services and the US military

• **Anonymous text & online messaging;** meets students where they are

• Breaks ‘code of silence’ about bullying & other issues

• Secure and web-based
Cyberbullying

Proactive and Responsive Schools

Deal with it now...
Deal with it *later*...
I get the law... I think...

- But what will that look like on my campus on Monday morning?
Responsive Schools

RESPOND

RESEARCH

REPORT

RECORD

REVISIT
RESEARCH
RECORD
Proactive Schools

- Public Awareness & Image
- Policy
- Personal Responsibility
- Professional Development

Diagram showing the interconnection of People, Public Awareness & Image, Policy, Personal Responsibility, and Professional Development.
POLICY
PUBLIC

AWARENESS and PERCEPTION
Mission

To be a voice for public school educators and the students they serve.

I could write a long statement written in 'edubabble' that sounds impressive but does not translate into how I want to interact with the world on a daily basis. We read them all the time. I have written many of them. I don't have to do that here.
Since 2005...

What ARE the Top 10 Issues students want to Talk about?
Top 10 Issues Talked About

1. Bullying / Cyberbullying
2. Stress
3. Family Problems
4. Depression
5. Fighting
6. Peer Pressure
7. Drugs
8. Cutting / Self-Injury
9. Cheating on Schoolwork
10. Sexual Harassment
Most Messages Sent From

1. 8th Graders
2. 7th Graders
3. 6th Graders
4. 9th Graders
How do we reach students today?

- 72% of all teens (88% of teen cell phone users) are texters
- 1 in 3 teens sends 100 + texts/day

Source: Teens and Mobile Phones report dated April 20, 2010
Creating a Culture of Dialogue
(Practical steps, funding resources, more)

Free download:
talk.schoolmessenger.com
How Talk About It helps
Talk About It is the First and only anonymous communication service that allows students to get the help they need to be safe and successful.
Faculty meet students where they are – online and with text messaging – to help solve issues.
By reducing the stigma of communicating with trusted adults, the service allows students to open up and break the code of silence.
A dialogue ensues, most often face-to-face, and students solve issues at the point of inception rather than when it is too late.
Creating a Culture of Dialogue
(Practical steps, funding resources, more)

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Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Schools Tackle Legal Twists and Turns of Cyberbullying**
Tragedies tied to cyberbullying have made national headlines. School leaders across the country are dealing with more-routine cases daily and often feel they have little legal advice or precedent to guide them in their decision making.

**Students Take a Stand Against Cyberbullying**
Experts say getting students to help support school policies to prevent cyberbullying is crucial for those measures to be effective.
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Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**State Cyberbullying Laws Range from Guidance to Mandate**
At least 44 states have anti-bullying laws, but the cyberbullying aspects of those measures run the gamut from effective to window dressing to possibly unconstitutional.

**Anonymous Bullying on Social Network Seeps Into Schools**
Formspring has become the newest battleground for school counselors who already feel they are losing the war against cyberbullying.
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