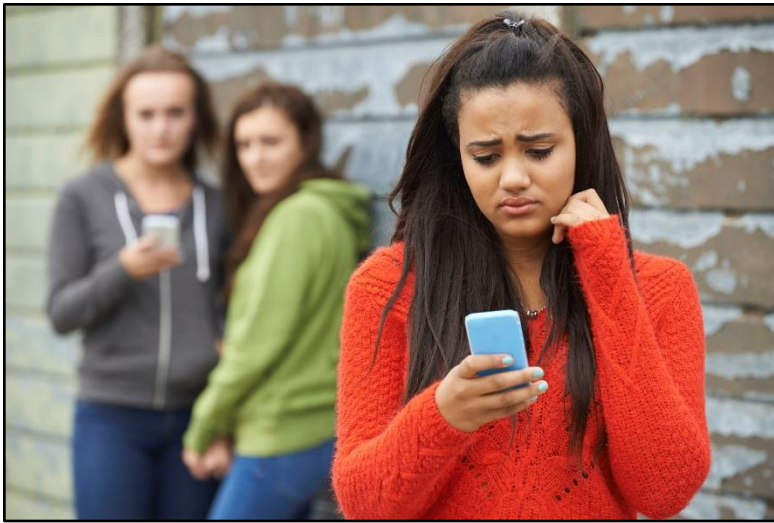




A Resource Guide To the Dangers of Social Media, Sexting and Cyberbullying



Today most of our students use the internet and social media in almost every aspect of their lives. The internet, mobile phones, computers and social media are the prominent means of communication and it plays a critical role in their daily activities. While the internet makes obtaining information easier and has many positive attributes in the learning process, it also comes with some dangers. It is important that all stakeholders are aware of these potential dangers and the necessary steps that we need to take as a community in safe guarding all of our students.

As a school district, we have seen an increased number of cases related to cyberbullying, digital bullying and sexting. We are gravely concerned about the impact these types of acts can have on everyone involved, particularly as it relates to our children. Every incident is taken seriously and investigated in accordance with district guidelines. One of the challenges with the internet and cell phones is that it can provide anonymity in communication. Fake profiles and identities can be created to allow a user to tease, bully, harass and intimidate people on various social media platforms.

I requested that a taskforce be formed, to include all stakeholders that will take a look at these issues, specifically as it relates to "sexting". The information contained in this guide is a resource to provide students, parents, educators and the community at-large with information about the consequences and dangers of sexting. The Paterson Public School district will continue to remain vigilant in our efforts to create and maintain an environment for our students to excel and thrive.

"If we can get kids to be thoughtful about making decisions about what they post online, then we've done a good job as parents and educators."

KNOW YOUR APPS & THEIR DANGERS!

You may think your kids use an app because it's a simple way for them stay in touch with their friends. This is certainly true for most kids, but unfortunately, most of these apps have hidden dangers.



Facebook: Users post photos, videos, comments, updates and personal information for others to read and share.

Facebook: Info, pics and videos shared to many (friends of friends) leaving personal info exposed.



Instagram: Users post videos and pictures often displaying locations with comments for others to read & share.

Instagram: Can send inappropriate pics through direct messages. It can direct message anyone.



Twitter: Users can read and send short messages, pics & videos known as "tweets".

Twitter: Permits nude and sexually explicit content on the site. Often used to send threats/hateful messages.



SnapChat: Regarded as most used social app by kids today, full featured texting, pics, video and entertainment.

SnapChat: Encourages sexting sending of inappropriate, nude, explicit pics/videos.



WhatsApp: Users send texts, documents, images, video, users' location and audio messages without using cellular data.

WhatsApp: A leading App that sends text, pics, videos "under the radar" without using cellular text plan.



Blendr: Exchange photos, videos and messages with new people at will to forge new relationships.

Blendr: "Chat, flirt and meet new people" is the slogan for this app, encourages hook ups.



Kik: Instant messaging app that can send pictures, videos and sketches on any smart or WiFi device to anyone.

Kik: Send text, pics and videos to strangers. Works on any Wifi device, not just phones. Linked to child sexual exploitation.



Omegle: Allows and encourages users to chat and "video cam" with others at will.

Omegle: "Talk to Strangers!" is the slogan for this app, which has been linked to child sexual exploitation.



Musical.ly: Short music videos where users lip-sync on camera, which are posted, commented on and saved

Musical.ly: Public settings publish videos for all to see, explicit music lyrics, suggestive dancing, nudity and sexually explicit content.



YikYak: Allows users to post up to 200 characters. Messages are viewed by the 500 closest Yackers determined by GPS tracking.

YikYak: Users are exposed to and are contributing sexually explicit content, derogatory language and personal attacks.



Whisper: An anonymous confession app. It allows users to superimpose text over a picture in order to share their thoughts anonymously.

Whisper: Due to the anonymity, kids are posting pics of other kids with derogatory text superimposed on the image.



Ask.FM: Ask and answer anonymous questions randomly

Ask.FM: Used to send hurtful messages, commonly linked to cyberbullying and inappropriate content.



Tinder: Dating and romance app with GPS locations to suggest matches nearby with chat features.

Tinder: Intended for adults ONLY to locate and message each other for casual romance. Displays accurate location!



Bumble: Online dating and romance app that uses GPS locations to match users with others who are nearby.

Bumble: Random people are able to locate and message you. Shows where you are at all times.



Down: Users can categorize their Facebook friends. They can indicate whether or not a friend is someone they'd like to hang with or someone they want to date.

Down: Although identifying someone you are willing to date doesn't mean you actually will, it creates a hook-up norm within a peer group.



Vaulty: Private media gallery, pic and video file storage app that blocks/locks access to the user by pin code.

Vaulty: Intended to hide nude/sexual pictures from parents view. Prevents access from anyone who is not a user.



Calculator%: Appears as a calculator app on a phone or Wifi device, but it actually stores media (like Vailty).

Calculator%: An app in disguise! Used to store nude/sexual pictures hidden from parents.



Venmo: Online payment method and money transfer app that can be linked to credit card(s) or bank account(s).

Venmo: Money transfer App that does NOT provide same protections as PayPal and used in fraud scheme

What is Sexting?

Sexting is the taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or nude images, photographs or videos of a person. Sexting between minors constitutes child pornography and is against Paterson Public Schools policy. Sexting between students is considered a Category II offense under the PPS Student Code of Conduct.

Punishment for Sexting

Under NJ state law these types of images or videos of minors is considered child pornography. Convictions of this crime may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, term of incarceration, a fine of up to \$150,000 and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries. Any person who partakes in "sexting" with or of minors will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the school district as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and/or potential meetings with Child Study Team members for students identified with an IEP; and reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies.

For incidents involving teen sexting, NJ enacted a provision under the law by which a judge can order a teen to participate in an education program or counseling instead of being criminally prosecuted for child pornography. In general, minors caught sexting would have to attend a state sponsored program recommended by the courts where he or she would learn about the potential state and federal legal consequences and penalties associated with sexting. Individuals over 18 or teens who previously committed these offenses will not be eligible for the educational program.



Social Safety

Assume EVERYONE has access to your profile
Parents, teachers, future employers and law enforcement, etc.

Use DISCRETION when putting pictures and content on your profile
Friends may think a picture is funny, but think how your parents or future employer may react.

Assume people WILL use the information on your profile to cause you harm
Don't put anything online you wouldn't want your worst enemy to know.

Assume there are predators out there trying to FIND YOU
Think like a predator. What information on your profile identifies who you are, where you hang out and where you live?

You may be held RESPONSIBLE for inappropriate content on your profile
Paterson School's policy on Sexting and Bullying allows the district to discipline students for online behavior.

Top 5 List for Teens

1. Ignore or flat-out reject any requests for inappropriate images.
2. Block individuals who make you feel uncomfortable with how they talk to you.
3. Never distribute or share explicit images or videos.
4. Notify your parent or an adult you trust if someone requests or sends inappropriate images to you.
5. Give the phone or device directly to your parent and have them contact the local police department

THE TRUTH ABOUT TEEN **SEXTING**

Why Do Teens Sext?

According to KidsHealth.org, many girls sext as a joke, as a way of getting attention or because of pressure from peers. Boys sometimes blame "pressure from friends." But for some, it's almost become normal behavior, a way of flirting, being seen as cool, or becoming popular. This may start out as simple text messages back and forth that escalate to inappropriate conversations about sex, and while the words exchanged between teens are un-prosecutable, it can lead to other acts such as the exchange of images that are prosecutable. Youth get some reinforcement for that when lewd celebrity pictures and videos go mainstream and the consequences are greater fame and reality TV shows, not ruined careers or humiliation.

Why Is Sexting So Serious?

When youth do something wrong, it is typically because they do not understand the consequences and ramifications of their actions. This is true with sexting. When a young person sends a nude or semi-nude photo and sexually explicit messages, they believe that these messages will be for the receiver's eyes only. This is not always true. Often times, when relationships fall apart, one or both young people will try to hurt their ex. One way that many youth will get back at each other is to use these sexts that were sent when things were good. Young people can send these sexually explicit photos and messages to classmates or post them on the internet.

Many youth do not understand that once something is on the internet, these images are there forever; **the information on the internet is there forever**. Young people do not think of these things when they are sexting. They may have a great deal of trust during the relationship, which makes them feel that there is no danger in sending these messages. When these messages become public, it can be very embarrassing for the sender, and can cause long term effects.

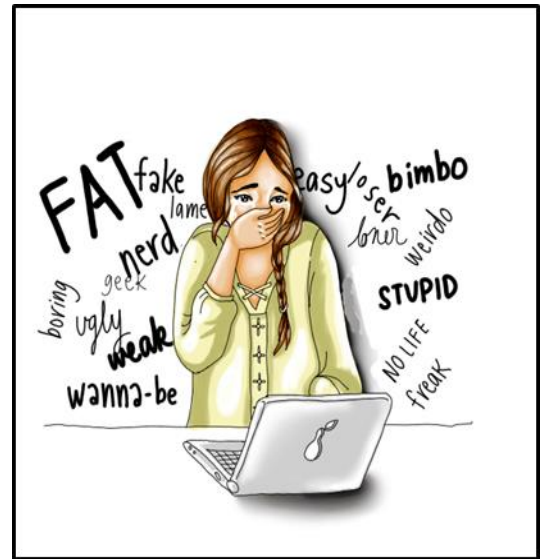
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PURPOSE OF **SEXTING**:



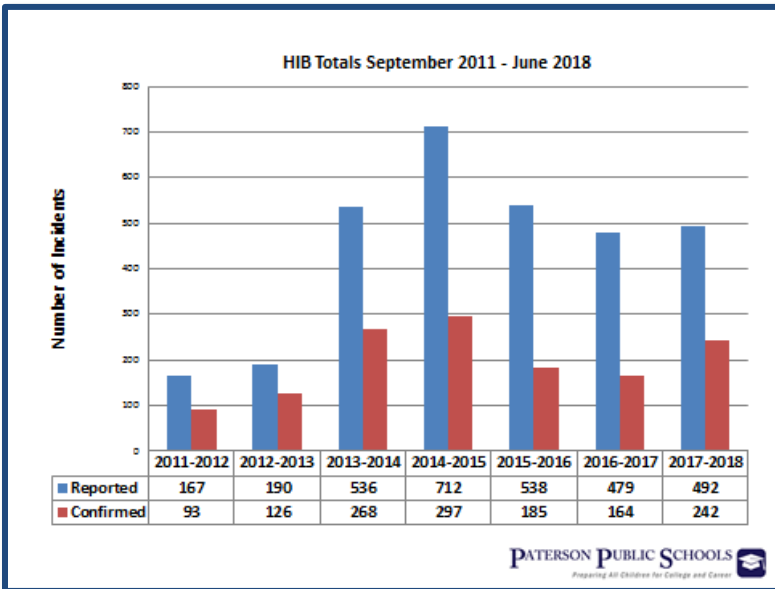
Paterson's Anti-Bullying Program

Paterson Public Schools has made it a district priority to maintain safe, caring, and orderly schools free of Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB). Policies have been developed in accordance with the NJ Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights to strengthen the standards and procedures for preventing, reporting, investigating, and responding to incidents of HIB of students that occur in school, off-school premises and "electronic communication" such as cyber-bullying, or bullying via text messages or social networking sites.

Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers all recognize that we have the public's trust and confidence to protect the well-being of all children in our school district. We want our students to know that diversity is valued, and that stereotyping and harassment are not acceptable behaviors. Our students and staff are strongly



encouraged to work together to prevent acts of harassment of any kind.



All staff in the district has been trained on our Bullying policy. If a student believes he or she has been subjected to HIB, the student is encouraged to report this to a teacher, the school principal, or the school's designated Anti-bullying specialist. Parents and students can also report anonymously online by visiting to <http://Paterson.k12.nj.us> and clicking on the Anti-Bullying Program link at the bottom left side of the home page. **Or you can call the District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Mr. T.J. Best at 973-321-2404.** The District is committed to prompt follow-up to any such report and will conduct a full investigation.

As expressed by the State's Bullying Commission: "Bullying and peer harassment is a function of school climate." To that end, the district has taken very aggressive steps implementing practices outlined in the State's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (ABR). These steps are essential in our efforts to "develop, foster and maintain a positive school climate by focusing on the on-going, systemic process and practices in the school and to address school climate issues such as Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB)".

The district continues to utilize an online paperless reporting system to accurately track HIB investigations and ensuring compliance with state reporting timelines. The above chart shows all the reported and confirmed cases of HIB in Paterson since the law was created. After taking a few years to fully understand the law and train all staff members, the district hit a high point in 2014. We now see a decrease in both the number of reported and confirmed incidents of HIB which is a direct result of better training and improved school culture around HIB.

Cyberbullying

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME THE NEW SCHOOL YARD FOR BULLIES

Red Flags that a child may be involved in cyberbullying!



ATTENTION!

A Child May Be A Target of Cyberbullying If:

- Unexpectedly stops using their device(s)
- Appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
- Appears uneasy about going to school or outside in general
- Appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after going online (including gaming)
- Is oversleeping or not sleeping enough
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and family members
- Shows increase or decrease in eating
- Seems regularly depressed
- Makes passing statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
- Loses interest in the things that mattered most to them
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- Frequently calls or texts from school requesting to go home ill
- Desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
- Becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities

WARNING!

A Child May Be Cyberbullying Others If:

- Quickly switches screens or hides their device when you are close by
- Uses their device(s) at all hours of the night
- Gets unusually upset if they can't use their device(s)
- Laughs excessively while using their device(s) and won't show you what's so funny
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- Seems to be using multiple online accounts or an account that is not their own
- Is dealing with increased behavioral issues at school or elsewhere
- Appears overly concerned with popularity or presence in a particular social circle
- Demonstrates increasing insensitivity or callousness toward other teens
- Starts to hang out with the "wrong" crowd
- Demonstrates violent tendencies
- Appears overly conceited as to their technological skills and abilities
- Is increasingly withdrawn or isolated from the family



What To Do When Your Child is Cyberbullied:

- Make sure your child is (and feels) safe
- Talk with and listen to your child
- Take possession of device
- Work with the school
- Refrain from contacting the parents of the bully
- Contact the content provider
- Contact the police when physical threats are involved
- If necessary, seek counseling

Reactions to Cyberbullying

While cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, the consequences are far-reaching and with the advent of apps like Facebook, SnapChat, Twitter, etc., it's becoming more prevalent than ever. Kidshealth.com reported that everyday over 150,000 kids nationwide stay home from school because of bullying. Victims may experience psychological and emotional damage, severe depression, anxiety, anger and even suicidal behavior. PPS investigates ALL reports of bullying and takes the allegations very seriously. Cyberbullying is the crime of Cyber Harassment in the State of NJ. Parents can report alleged acts to the local police department.

safebook

YOU **THINK** Think before you post

FRIENDS Only connect with friends

KIND Be kind to others

PASSWORD Don't share your password

PRIVACY Keep your settings private

HURT Don't be hurtful towards others

PARENTS & TEACHERS
Join Facebook
Understand how it works
Teach safety and responsibility
Privacy - check their settings

FRIENDS
DON'T: Stay silent
DO: Help your friend
Report the bully
Tell your parents
Tell your teacher

THE BULLY
DON'T: Respond
DO: Save what they say
Unfriend the person
Block them
Tell a Friend
Tell your Parents
Report the person

TELL • UNFRIEND • BLOCK • REPORT

This is our reaction to cyber-bullying. We must all play our part! Play yours - email design@fuzion.ie for a print ready file

Types of cyberbullying include:

FLAMING: Using inappropriate or vulgar language to attack or fight with someone.

HARASSING: Repeatedly sending inappropriate, hurtful or hateful messages.

IMPERSONATION: Posing as someone for the purposes of damaging their reputation, inviting an attack, or sharing real or fabricated information about them.

OUTING: Sharing a victim's secrets or personal information in a public forum.

EXCLUSION: Intentionally and publicly excluding someone from a group, and tormenting them after exclusion.

STALKING: Electronically "following" someone and sending them targeted messages with the intention of scaring, harming or intimidating them.



To report an incident: Go to PPS homepage, at www.paterson.k12.nj.us click "Anti-Bullying Program" at the bottom of the page. On the right hand side of the page click on the icon to "Report Bullying".



Read Definition of HIB, Click

"Continue" and fill in the details of each tab including your contact information and click "Submit" when done or simply call 973-321-2404.

BULLYING INVESTIGATIVE FLOWCHART PROCESS

STEP 1	STEP 2
Any person who sees or experiences an incident of HIB can anonymously report the incident via the HIBster link on the school district website.	School staff members are required by law to verbally report all incidents of HIB on the same day of the incident, to the school principal and fill out the online incident report within two (2) days.
STEP 3	STEP 4
Within one (1) day of receiving the incident report, the principal must assign an Anti-Bullying Specialist (ABS) to begin an investigation, and notify all parents or guardians of the students involved.	The ABS must complete the investigation within ten (10) school days and submit their findings to the principal.
STEP 5	STEP 6
The principal will review the finding(s) and make recommendations to the assistant superintendent within two (2) days for the official actions, which may include: intervention services, training programs, discipline, counseling or other appropriate actions.	The anti-bullying coordinator (ABC) will report out all incidents or HIB and actions taken at the Board of Education's regular meeting, who must vote to affirm, reject or modify actions taken.
STEP 7	STEP 8
Parents will be notified of the investigation results and actions taken in writing, for their respective child only, within five (5) days of the Board of Education meeting.	Parents are entitled to request a hearing with the Board of Education in Executive Session to appeal the Board of Education's decision. The Board will then reconsider the parent's request at the next regular meeting and issue a written decision.
STEP 9	STEP 10
Parents who are still not satisfied with the Board's action can appeal the decision to the NJ Commissioner of Education who will affirm, reject, modify or refer to the NJ Administrative Courts.	The NJ Administrative Court Judge will make the final decision in any appeal situation.

The Paterson Board of Education would like to thank the Sexting and Cyberbullying Taskforce for the creation of this document and the MMA for the use of some content.



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