



## Internet Safety Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 5 \* Feb 2010\*

Brought to you by the FLVS Internet Safety Committee

### Do you know what your child is texting?

While watching TV with my son a preview for an upcoming episode of a teen show came on. The theme of the show was a girlfriend texting a naked picture to her boyfriend. I was thankful at that point that my sons are young and don't even own a phone. This is something I didn't have to address for quite some time. I put it out of my mind and moved on. A week later I was watching TV again and an ad on MTV came on about the same subject now referring to it as sexting. My husband began to discuss the article he read about this in the paper and how it is the "new" thing among teens.

For those of you out of the loop sexting is when revealing photos or messages are sent across a cell phone. You do not always know how large or who your audience really is. Teens that are caught could possibly be prosecuted as sex offenders. Unknowingly they send pictures or messages with improper content that once they have been published they cannot be retrieved. This is even being pursued by some prosecutors to possibly be considered as "child pornography". So it is important to have a serious chat with them about being careful in this area.

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### Beyond the School Yard

No longer are bullies limited to the school yard to dish out harmful comments and black eyes. They now have access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using the internet and cell phones. Below are startling statistics from the iSafe website regarding cyber bullying.

#### Cyber Bullying Statistics

- 42% of kids have been bullied while online. 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once.
- 35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.
- 21% of kids have received mean or threatening e-mail or other messages.
- 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.
- 53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than 1 in 3 have done it more than once.
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

*Based on 2004 i-SAFE survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8*

## Cyber Bullying Tips for Students

- Tell a trusted adult about the bullying, and keep telling until you find someone who takes action.
  - Don't open or read messages from cyber bullies.
  - Tell a teacher or administrator at your school if it is school related.
  - Don't erase the messages ~ they may be needed to take action.
  - Protect yourself: Never agree to meet face to face with anyone you meet online.
  - If bullied through chat or instant messaging, the "bully" can often be blocked.
  - If you are threatened with harm, inform the local police.
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