



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 7-8
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Duration:	One hour per activity

Cyberbullying and Civic Participation

Overview

This lesson allows students to explore the concept of civic participation in the creation of Canadian laws through a study of the consultation process found in the *Canada Gazette*. Students will create their own *School Gazette* by proposing and discussing rules against cyberbullying at school.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- understand the role of rules and laws in society
- explain the role of the *Canada Gazette* in the creation and publication of proposed regulations in Canada
- suggest rules for preventing cyberbullying
- establish a consultative process similar to that of the *Canada Gazette* for the rules they have proposed

Preparation and Materials

- Read the *Cyberbullying Backgrounder* and *About the Canada Gazette: Backgrounder for Teachers*
- Prior to class, distribute to parents or guardians the *Parents' Guide to Cyberbullying*
- Photocopy any school rules (for using the computer room, against bullying, etc.)
- Photocopy the student handouts:
 - *Ways to Avoid Cyberbullying*
 - *Rights and Responsibilities of _____ Student and Citizen*
- Prepare the overheads:
 - *Canada Gazette*
 - *Consultation Page From the Canada Gazette Website*
- Make several copies (at least three) of your school's crest

Activity One: What Good Are Rules?

Guessing Game

Divide the class into two groups, A and B, and arrange each so that your instructions to each cannot be overheard by the other group.



For Group A, tell them that they are playing a guessing game where Group B will choose an animal, and Group A must guess what the animal is by asking questions. Group B can answer the questions with only “yes” or “no”.

Tell Group B that you are playing a spelling game where Group A will be asking them a number of questions. If the last word of the question ends with a vowel, Group B must answer “yes”; if it ends with a consonant, they are to answer “no”. Any answers but “yes” or “no” will disqualify Group B.

Tell both groups that the game will end after five minutes.

(Be prepared for some noise and confusion! Obviously, Group A will not be able to guess correctly because the Group B’s answers will not follow the same rules as their questions.)

Class Discussion

Once the game is over, let the two groups compare their experiences and discover that they were not playing by the same rules. Guide the discussion by asking the following questions:

- What were the rules of the game? *(Each group will provide the rules they were given.)*
- What happened? *(Each group thought they were playing by the same rules, but they weren’t. Therefore, the game did not go as it should have.)*
- Why are rules important in a game? *(Rules make sure that everyone is playing in the same way.)*
- Can you think of different kinds of rules? *(Answers might include school rules, household rules, rules of the road and laws.)*

Write the examples given by the students on the board, and distribute photocopies of the rules relating to your school when they are mentioned. Then ask:

- What good are rules? *(Rules help keep order by telling us what we can’t do (restrictive rules) or what we are required to do (prescriptive rules). Rules also tell us what we have a right to, for example, the right to education and the right to equal treatment.)*

Ask students to think of various rules that may be applied at home, at school or across the country. As students make their suggestions, organize them in a table on the board, as follows:

		At Home	At School	Across the Country (national laws)
Responsibilities	Restrictive rules (what we can’t do)			
	Prescriptive rules (what we are required to do)			
Rights	What we can always do			

(Mention that there are even international laws, which apply to more than one country.)

When the table has been completed, distribute the handout *Rights and Responsibilities of _____ Student and Citizen* (ask students to fill in the blank with their names). Instruct each student to fill in the rows and columns of the table with the list that the class has developed.

Be sure to cover the following points:

- Some rules are both restrictive and prescriptive, like traffic rules.
- Some rules can be seen as both a right and a responsibility. *For example, even if young people under the age of 16 don't want to go to school every day, they have to. At the same time, in Canada nobody – not even parents – can prevent a student from attending school and learning the basic skills (literacy, numeracy and so on) that will allow her or him to succeed. This is a right that had to be fought for and is not held by every child in every country.*
- While household rules may differ from family to family, the rules of a school and country are the same for everyone.
- Are there rules that are both household and school rules? *(For example, to show respect toward others.)*

Once students have filled in their tables, ask them where they can find the rules that the class wrote on the board for households and for the school? Are these rules written down somewhere?

Point out that when rules are written down, it is easier to know them and, therefore, easier to follow them.

Activity Two: Creating new rules – The *Canada Gazette*

The *Canada Gazette*

To teach students how people can find out about Canada's "rules" or laws, project the *Canada Gazette* overhead. Explain that this gazette grants all Canadians access to laws and regulations.

Point out the elements of the projected page to the students:

- Everything is written in Canada's two official languages.
- It has the crest of the Government of Canada, which shows that it is an official document.
- It is dated.

It has an explanation of the structure of the document, which is divided into three parts:

- Part I contains notices and proposed regulations
- Part II contains official regulations
- Part III contains official Acts of Parliament, which is where Acts become law

It explains clearly how you can get the *Canada Gazette*. (It is freely available in most public libraries, you can subscribe, and you can consult it for free on the Internet.)



Changing Rules and Laws

Return to the table of rules that you generated with the class (household, school and country) and ask the following questions:

- At home and at school, is it possible to discuss rules if you don't agree with them?
- Is it possible to modify them?

Once students have answered with regard to household and school rules, ask them:

- Can national laws be discussed and modified? How?

Give the students some time to express their opinions, and then explain in more detail the three parts of the *Canada Gazette*:

- Part I - notices and **proposed** regulations: These are the regulations on which any citizen can comment and propose changes.
- Part II - official regulations: This is where regulations from Part I appear once they have been modified as a result of the comments made when they were published in Part I and passed by Parliament.

Part III – contains public Acts of Parliament and is published as soon as is possible after they have received Royal Assent (which is where an Act becomes law).

Project the *Consultation Page From the Canada Gazette Website* overhead and explain to students that you will be looking more closely at Part I of the *Canada Gazette*. Point out that Part I contains a section called “Consultation,” which asks for public participation. It says:

All Canadians have a chance to submit their comments to the government departments and agencies responsible for the proposed regulations before these are enacted and then published in Part II of the Canada Gazette. This is called the consultation process. The name and contact information of the person responsible for a text of regulations is found at the end of each regulatory impact analysis statement that accompanies the proposed regulations, under “Contact.” A list of ongoing consultation on proposed regulations is found on our [Consultation](#) page.

Paraphrase this for students, explaining that this allows Canadians to comment on proposed regulations, with those comments being published in Part II of the document.

Class Discussion

Ask students the following questions:

- Do you think it is a good idea to be able to change laws? Why or why not? (*The world changes and laws need to be able to adapt to change.*)
- Have things changed at school between your parents' generation and yours? (*Schools now have computers, the Internet and cell phones.*)
- Look again at the school rules that I gave you earlier. Which rules relate to computers and other digital tools? Underline them.



- In front of each rule you just underlined, write a “P” if it is a prescriptive rule and an “R” if it is a restrictive rule.
- In general, rules are created by imagining or seeing how things could go badly in a particular situation. Do you think that the rules you’re looking at are good at predicting all the problems that might arise out of the use of computers and cell phones? (*Introduce here the idea of cyberbullying a kind of bullying that takes place in an online environment.*)

Now ask the following questions:

- What might be the roles of those involved in a cyberbullying situation? (*Generally, you have the perpetrator, a target and bystanders who witness a conversation thread or receive and may resend threatening or harassing messages.*)
- What are some ways that people can be cyberbullied? Why might a perpetrator do this? (*See Table 1: Perpetrators*)
- How might the target react? Why? (*See Table 2: Targets*)
- How might bystanders react to cyberbullying? Why? (*See Table 3: Bystanders*)

On the board, fill in the first two columns of Tables 1 to 3 as students answer the questions. The content of the first two columns will allow you to guide the class discussion. (For now, omit the last column, “Suggest a rule to deal with this problem.”)

Announce to the students, “Now that we’ve looked at the roles and some possible actions involved in cyberbullying, let’s try to come up with rules for each case, to help people react correctly in each situation.”

Divide the class into three groups, and instruct each group to concentrate on creating a different set of rules: Group E will work on online ethics, Group T on advice for the target, and Group B on suggestions for bystanders.

Once the three groups have been organized, distribute the *Ways to Avoid Cyberbullying* handout.



Table 1: Perpetrators

(Group E will suggest rules to address problems relating to perpetrators.)

What does the perpetrator do?	What types of bullying may occur?	Suggest a rule to deal with this problem
He or she bullies	Direct: Creating a web page, posting harassing messages about someone, or making photos or private messages about someone public without his or her consent.	E1: Respect the private lives of other people online; don't spread rumours, don't share information about or photos of someone without getting his or her permission.
	Indirect: Encouraging others to exclude someone from their "friend" or "buddy" list.	E2: In the online world, just like in the offline world, never try to exclude other people.
	Indirect – "bullying by proxy": Making someone else post a harassing message about a third person, just to test his or her dominance.	E3: Don't try to turn people against one another; making someone else be a bully is no different from being a bully yourself.
	"Blind": In a blog, chat room or game, insulting those present $\frac{3}{4}$ whom the bully does not even know $\frac{3}{4}$ just to upset them, or see what happens.	E4: Follow the same values in the virtual world as in the physical world; never write to anyone something you wouldn't be willing to say face-to-face. If you feel an urge to write something angry, sleep on it.



Table 2: Targets

(Group T will suggest rules relating to targets.)

How does the target react?		Suggest a rule to deal with this problem
She or he reports it...	...to parents, or the school.	<p>T1. Stop: immediately leave the online environment or activity where the bullying is happening (chat room, newsgroup, game, IM, etc.).</p> <p>Block all emails or instant messages from the perpetrator, and never reply.</p> <p>Record all harassing messages and forward them to your Internet Service Provider. Most ISPs have policies against harassing messages.</p> <p>Talk: tell a trusted adult, such as a parent or teacher.</p>
She or he keeps it quiet...	... because the perpetrator is blackmailing her or him with images or photos the perpetrator is threatening to make public.	<p>T2. Never put anything online that you wouldn't want the whole world to see.</p>
	Because she or he thinks the perpetrator cannot be identified.	<p>T3: If you receive an anonymous harassing message, ask your ISP to find out where the message came from by tracking the message's IP address.</p>
	Because the target thinks her or his parents will cut off the Internet access.	<p>T4: Create an educational guide for parents on cyberbullying (see Extension Activity Two).</p>



Table 3: Bystanders

(Group B will suggest rules for bystanders.)

How do bystanders react?	What do they do?	Suggest a rule to deal with this problem
They take the perpetrator's side	They help the perpetrator by circulating photos or messages that harm the target.	B1: Refuse the request or instruction to pass on an insulting or other harmful message, photo or video.
	They laugh along with the perpetrator or leave approving messages, which encourages him or her.	B2: In all cases, take action against the perpetrator: react when your friends get involved in cyberbullying, and speak up every time you witness online harassment. Most young people are more sensitive to criticism from their peers than from their parents.
They take the target's side	They report the incident to an adult (parent, police or school staff).	
They don't take either side	They assume the target provoked the perpetrator or they think the target is exaggerating.	There is no such thing as a NEUTRAL bystander! If you do nothing, you are taking the Bully's side.

Rules to Stop Cyberbullying

Give students the following instructions:

- Write your group's subject at the top of the first column: perpetrator, target or bystanders.
- Fill in the first two columns from what I've written on the board.
- Try to come up with rules for each case in your subject category.

Circulate among the groups to make sure that students understand the instructions. Spend extra time with the group that is working on rules for the target, to introduce them to the "Stop – Block – Talk – Record" strategy:

- **Stop:** immediately leave the online environment or activity where the bullying is happening (chat room, newsgroup, game, IM, etc.)
- **Block** all emails or instant messages from the perpetrator, and never reply
- **Talk:** tell a trusted adult, such as a parent or teacher
- **Record** all harassing messages and forward them to your Internet Service Provider. Most ISPs have policies against harassing messages.



Activity Three: The Democratic Process – *School Gazette*

A School Gazette

Once the groups have finished developing their rules, have them create a *School Gazette*. (If the class is bilingual and time permits, encourage them to create their gazette in both official languages.) Instruct students as follows:

- We're now going to create our own *School Gazette*, following the same principles as the *Canada Gazette*.
- Make a first page that follows the formula from the *Canada Gazette*: include the date and replace "Canada" with the name of our school. Write down the purpose of your gazette. (Tell them that Part I is intended to gather opinions on the rules they have proposed for dealing with cyberbullying at school.) Provide photocopies of the school crest, for students to cut out and put onto the first page.

Note: Ask the group that made up the rules for bystanders (who will be the least busy) to create **two** first pages: one that will say "Part I," and the other "Part II." Have them put the second one aside for later use. For all groups provide the following instructions:

- Make a second page where you will list the rules you've come up with. Give each rule a number and a letter code, using your group's letter (E1, T1 or B1.)
- Make a third page titled "Consultation" and leave it blank.

Consultation

Once groups have created their gazettes, begin the consultation process by asking them to exchange their pages with other groups. Instruct students to make a comment next to each rule to indicate whether the rule is **complete**, and whether it is written in a **clear and factual** way.

Once all the gazettes have been annotated by other groups, assemble a definitive list of rules with the class. Make sure students consider the various comments on each rule and make changes as necessary. Use your final edited versions to complete the table on the board; at the same time, a student should make a final copy of the rules on a piece of paper.

(The third column of tables 1, 2 and 3 can be used as a guide to help the class develop the final rules.)

Transcribe the final rules to the "Part II" pages that the bystander group created earlier, and post them on the classroom wall.

Extension Activity One

(You may wish to consult with your school's administration before doing either of the following activities.)

The democratic process can be extended by including the whole school in the consultation. Collect the rules developed by all three groups in a single *Student Gazette* and post it in the hall for all students to consider and comment on.

Organize an open forum for all interested students (at lunch break or after class) in which they can discuss rules on cyberbullying and comment on the proposed rules.

Extension Activity Two

Create an educational guide for parents to explain what cyberbullying is and how to deal with it at home.



The Rights and Responsibilities of _____, Student and Citizen

		At Home	At School	Across the Country (national laws)
Responsibilities	Restrictive rules (what we can't do)			
	Prescriptive rules (what we are required to do)			
Rights	What we can always do			

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Part I

Partie I

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NOTICE TO READERS

The *Canada Gazette* is published under authority of the *Statutory Instruments Act*. It consists of three parts as described below:

- Part I Material required by federal statute or regulation to be published in the *Canada Gazette* other than items identified for Part II and Part III below — Published every Saturday
- Part II Statutory Instruments (Regulations) and other classes of statutory instruments and documents — Published January 9, 2008, and at least every second Wednesday thereafter
- Part III Public Acts of Parliament and their enactment proclamations — Published as soon as is reasonably practicable after Royal Assent

The *Canada Gazette* is available in most public libraries for consultation.

To subscribe to, or obtain copies of, the *Canada Gazette*, contact bookstores selling government publications as listed in the telephone directory or write to Government of Canada Publications, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S5.

The *Canada Gazette* is also available free of charge on the Internet at <http://canadagazette.gc.ca>. It is accessible in Portable Document Format (PDF) and in HyperText Mark-up Language (HTML) as the alternate format. The on-line PDF format of Part I, Part II and Part III is official since April 1, 2003, and is published simultaneously with the printed copy.

AVIS AU LECTEUR

La *Gazette du Canada* est publiée conformément aux dispositions de la *Loi sur les textes réglementaires*. Elle est composée des trois parties suivantes :

- Partie I Textes devant être publiés dans la *Gazette du Canada* conformément aux exigences d'une loi fédérale ou d'un règlement fédéral et qui ne satisfont pas aux critères de la Partie II et de la Partie III — Publiée le samedi
- Partie II Textes réglementaires (Règlements) et autres catégories de textes réglementaires et de documents — Publiée le 9 janvier 2008 et au moins tous les deux mercredis par la suite
- Partie III Lois d'intérêt public du Parlement et les proclamations énonçant leur entrée en vigueur — Publiée aussitôt que possible après la sanction royale

On peut consulter la *Gazette du Canada* dans la plupart des bibliothèques publiques.

On peut s'abonner à la *Gazette du Canada* ou en obtenir des exemplaires en s'adressant aux agents libraires associés énumérés dans l'annuaire téléphonique ou en s'adressant à : Publications du gouvernement du Canada, Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S5.

La *Gazette du Canada* est aussi offerte gratuitement sur Internet au <http://gazetteducanada.gc.ca>. La publication y est accessible en format de document portable (PDF) et en langage hypertexte (HTML) comme média substitut. Le format PDF en direct de la Partie I, de la Partie II et de la Partie III est officiel depuis le 1^{er} avril 2003 et est publié en même temps que la copie imprimée.



Consultation Page From the *Canada Gazette* Website



Government of Canada
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- [Current Consultations in the *Canada Gazette*](#)
- [Government of Canada Consultation Portal](#)

Your comments and input play an important part in Canada's regulatory process. Do you have an opinion on the types of controls that should be put in place to safeguard the environment, the foods you eat, or the drugs you buy? These are just some of the many regulations that affect the daily lives of Canadians.

The Regulatory Policy requires that federal departments and agencies demonstrate that Canadians have been consulted and that they have had an opportunity to participate in developing or modifying regulations and regulatory programmes.

Pre-publication in Part I of the *Canada Gazette* gives various interested groups and individuals, as well as Canadians in general, a final opportunity to review and comment on a proposed regulation at the last stages of the regulation-making process, before it is enacted and published in Part II of the *Canada Gazette*.

Pre-publication also gives interested parties, those stakeholders previously consulted at the beginning of the regulatory process, the opportunity to see how the final draft proposal is in keeping with previous consultation drafts.

Current Consultations in the *Canada Gazette*

The following contains a list of the current proposed regulations about which you are invited to send your comments:

Department of Citizenship and Immigration
 Proposed Regulations: [Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations \(Permanent Resident Cards\)](#)
 RIAS: [Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement](#)
 Date of publication: [Saturday, March 29, 2008](#)
 Number of days for comments: 15 days (March 29, 2008 to April 13, 2008)
 Contact: [Donald Pineau](#)



Ways to Avoid Cyberbullying

What does the _____ do?	Explain how and why	Suggest a rule to deal with this problem



About the *Canada Gazette*: Backgrounder for Teachers

What is the *Canada Gazette*?

The *Canada Gazette* is the “official newspaper” of the Government of Canada. It has been published regularly by the Queen’s Printer since 1841. In it are published new statutes and regulations, proposed regulations, decisions of administrative boards and an assortment of government notices. Private sector notices which are required by statute to be published so as to inform the public also appear in the *Canada Gazette*.

The *Canada Gazette* is published pursuant to section 10 of the *Statutory Instruments Act*, which confers the responsibility for the *Canada Gazette* to the Queen’s Printer. The *Statutory Instruments Regulations* regulate the manner in which the *Canada Gazette* is published, the publication dates and the subscription fees.

How does the *Canada Gazette* serve Canadians?

1. It provides access
Canadians have a right of access to the laws and regulations that govern their daily lives. The *Canada Gazette* is one of the vehicles that guarantee that right of access.
2. It engages citizens
The *Canada Gazette* serves as a vehicle for consulting the general public on proposed regulations found in Part I. Following extensive consultation, pre-publication of a regulation in Part I gives Canadians a last chance to actively contribute to the regulatory process by sending their comments to the appropriate department or agency concerning specific issues that concern them.
3. It assists the private sector in meeting legal requirements
The private sector is also required to publish certain notices in the *Canada Gazette*. The Canada Gazette Directorate provides an advisory and publication service to the private sector for legal requirements such as those for the protection of our environment. Under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, notice of any building of bridges, roads or buildings which would pass over, through or on a body of water must be published in Part I of the *Canada Gazette*. Private sector companies such as banks, loan companies, railways and insurance companies are also required to publish in the *Canada Gazette*.

Part I: Notices and proposed regulations

Part I is most often divided into the following six categories:

- **Government house:** contains notices of orders, decorations, medals and mention in dispatches awarded to Canadians.
- **Government notices:** contains notices published by federal departments.
- **Parliament:** contains notices published by the House of Commons, the Commissioner of Canada Elections, the Senate, and the Chief Electoral Officer.
- **Commissions:** contains notices published by federal agencies, boards and commissions.



- **Miscellaneous notices:** contains notices published by private companies, individuals, and municipal and provincial governments.
- **Proposed regulations:** contains regulations that have not been enacted and that can be commented on.

Public participation

It is through Part I that the Government includes Canadians in the regulatory process. All Canadians have a chance to submit their comments to the government departments and agencies responsible for the proposed regulations before these are enacted and then published in Part II of the *Canada Gazette*. This is called the consultation process. The name and contact information of the person responsible for a text of regulations is found at the end of each regulatory impact analysis statement that accompanies the proposed regulations, under “Contact.” A list of ongoing consultation on proposed regulations is found on the Consultation page. (<http://gazette.gc.ca/consult/consult-eng.html>).

Part II: Official regulations

Published every other Wednesday, Part II contains all regulations that have been enacted as well as other classes of statutory instruments, such as orders in council, orders and proclamations. Each document has an **SOR** number or an **SI** number. Only government departments and agencies publish in Part II. Also under this part, *Canada Gazette* publishes an index of statutory instruments consolidated from January 1, 1955. This consolidated index is published four times a year.

Part III: Acts of Parliament

Part III, which contains public Acts of Parliament, is published as soon as is reasonably practicable after Royal Assent to the Acts. It also contains a list of the Proclamations of Canada and Orders in Council relating to the coming into force of Federal Acts.

The Department of Justice determines the publication date of each issue of Part III.

The entirety of this document, and more, is accessible at <http://gazette.gc.ca/cg-gc/lm-sp-eng.html>.



Cyberbullying Backgrounder

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a specific relationship characterized by recurrent abuse of power by a person (or group) over another person. Bullying is expressed differently depending on the age of the abuser.¹

What is Cyberbullying?

As its name implies, cyberbullying is bullying through an electronic medium such as a computer or cell phone.

Roles

For the purposes of this document, those who are involved in cyberbullying are categorized as perpetrators, targets and bystanders.

Perpetrators: Although cyberbullying might appear to be simply another means used by “traditional” bullies to reach their target, the virtual attributes of the Internet have fostered a new type of bully: someone who capitalizes on online anonymity to initiate bullying behaviour.

Believing themselves to be anonymous, some young people feel free to commit acts online that they would never carry out in person. In addition, the frequency with which adolescents share online passwords provides perpetrators, when caught, with the ready excuse that someone else may have assumed their identity to send bullying messages.

In addition to anonymity, the absence of visual and auditory feedback online can also fuel hurtful behaviour. According to Nancy Willard, from the Responsible Netizen Institute, this type of technology can affect students’ ethical behaviour because they are not fully aware of the impact of their actions on others. This lack of feedback reduces feelings of empathy or remorse. “When people use technology, there is a lack of tangible feedback about the consequences of actions on others”.²

As such, students may write things online that they would never say in person because they feel removed from their own actions and from the person at the receiving end. As a student who participated in focus testing for MediaSmarts’ *Young Canadians in a Wired World* research commented:

[With] the Internet, you can really get away with a lot more because I don't think a lot of people would have enough confidence to walk up to someone and be like, “I hate you, you're ugly.” But over the Internet you don't really see their face or they don't see yours and you don't have to look in their eyes and see they're hurt.

Targets: In this lesson series the term “target” is used instead of “victim.” The term “victim” implies powerlessness and passivity, whereas “target” is considered to be more neutral.

Although there is no physical violence, cyberbullying may be more frightening to targets because there are, potentially, an unlimited number of witnesses. When perpetrators are anonymous, targets don’t know which peers to watch out for or respond to—leading to feelings of helplessness. With no one to point to, targets may be less likely to file complaints.



The targets' situation is compounded by the reality that the home, which traditionally offers respite to bullying, is no longer safe, with cyberbullying continuing on the home computer.

Bystanders: This important group forms the social consensus for bullying behaviour $\frac{3}{4}$ online and offline. In a study of 2,095 students conducted by the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto in March, 2008, 28% reported having witnessed cyberbullying. Of this percentage:

- 9% became involved in the bullying behaviour
- 32% watched but didn't participate
- 14% voiced their objection to the person doing the bullying
- 21% tried to stop the bully
- 11% left the online environment
- 7% tried to befriend the bully, and
- 7% reported the bully to someone who could help.³

In general, the longer the bullying persists, the more likely it is that the number of witnesses who are willing to join in will increase.⁴

Online Methods of Cyberbullying

There are several ways that young people bully others online. They may send emails or instant messages containing insults or threats directly to a person. They may also spread hateful comments about a person to others through email, instant messaging or postings on websites and online diaries (blogs). Or they may steal passwords to email or instant messaging accounts belonging to other youth and send out threatening emails or instant messages under an assumed identity. It's not unknown for technically savvy kids to build password-protected websites to target specific students or teachers.

Increasing numbers of children and youth are being bullied through text messaging with cell phones. The use of cell phones is challenging the ability of adults to monitor and guide children because, unlike a computer placed in a public area of a home, school or library, mobiles are personal, private, connected—and always accessible. Kids tend to keep their phones turned on at all times, meaning that bullies can harass victims at school or even in their own bedrooms.

Built-in digital cameras in cell phones add a new dimension to the problem. In one case students used a camera-enabled cell phone to take a photo of an overweight classmate in the shower after gym. The picture was distributed throughout the school email list within minutes.

Schools are struggling to address the issue of cyberbullying among students, especially when it occurs outside of school. When real-world bullying occurs in a schoolyard or classroom, teachers are often able to intervene, but online bullying takes place off the radar screen of adults, making it difficult to detect in schools and impossible to monitor off school property.



The Extent of the Problem

The Pew Report *Cyberbullying and Online Teens* (2007) reports that “about one third (32%) of all teenagers who use the Internet say they have been targets of a range of annoying and potentially menacing online activities, such as receiving threatening messages; having their private emails or text messages forwarded without consent; having an embarrassing picture posted without permission; or having rumours about them spread online.”⁵ As well, 38% of girls reported having been bullied online, compared to 26% of boys. The group reporting the highest rate of cyberbullying was girls 15 to 17 years of age, at 41%.⁶

In Canada, in its 2007 poll on the state of the teaching profession, Ontario’s College of Teachers found 84 % of respondents reporting having been targets of cyberbullying by their students (a figure that rises to 93% for French-language teachers).

Cyberbullying and the Law

Young people should be aware that some forms of online bullying are considered criminal acts. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your communication causes them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others. It’s also a crime to publish a “defamatory libel”—writing something that is designed to insult a person or is likely to injure a person’s reputation by exposing him or her to hatred, contempt or ridicule.

A cyberbully may also be violating the Canadian Human Rights Act if he or she spreads hate or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.

The Role of the School

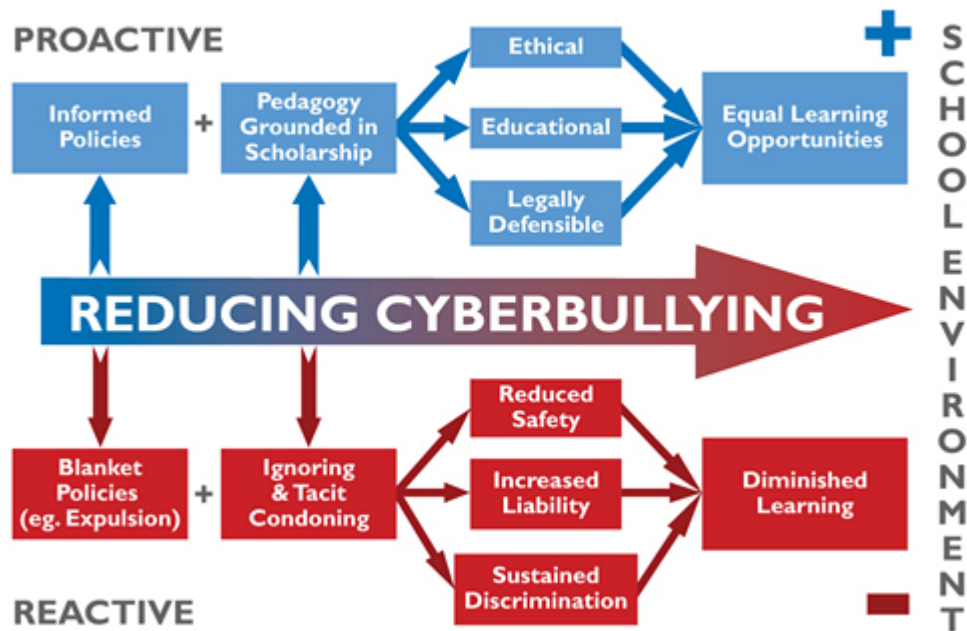
Most bullying relationships are struck at school and, therefore, cyberbullying has a direct negative impact on the atmosphere at school or in the classroom. In her 2004 *Educator’s Guide to Cyber Bullying*, Nancy Willard recommends schools develop a comprehensive approach to address cyberbullying that includes:

- engaging in participatory planning that involves current school-based programs (such as safe schools initiatives) and non-school participants – police, parents and community groups and social agencies
- conducting a needs assessment
- ensuring that an effective anti-bullying program is in place
- reviewing existing policies and procedures (update their bullying policy to include harassment perpetrated with mobile and Internet technology, and computer Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) to specifically prohibit using the Internet for bullying)
- conducting professional development
- providing parent education (organize parent education nights and workshops)
- providing student education (integrate anti-bullying and cyberbullying education into existing curriculum, so it is not another ‘add on’)
- evaluating the program to determine its effectiveness



Dr. Shaheen Shariff at McGill University emphasizes that schools have a responsibility “to adapt to a rapidly evolving technological society, address emerging challenges, and guide children to become civic-minded individuals”.⁷ According to Shariff, schools must support a preventive approach to cyberbullying in order to promote equal opportunity learning. A reactive approach (where, for example, cyberbullies are suspended) weakens learning.⁸

Cyberbullying School Response: Proactive and Reactive



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As this table illustrates, schools must take a proactive approach in order to strike a balance between freedom of expression and providing a safe learning environment where students feel safe and protected from all kinds of bullying.

In the classroom, teachers can create an environment of inclusiveness in which every student is valued. Teachers should:

- examine their own attitudes and demonstrate a respectful attitude towards all students and other staff
- intervene whenever a child is being bullied – this includes speaking out if they see other teachers exhibiting aggressive or demeaning behaviour towards a student
- seek out shy, marginalized students and encourage their involvement in the classroom by promoting any special talents they have
- encourage healthy relationships by integrating strategies for discouraging bullying into classroom activities

Developing a sense of *control*—a belief in one’s ability to take charge of the controllable aspects of a situation and influence a more positive outcome—can make a difference in helping young people build resiliency toward and take control of bullying situations.⁹ Adults can help young people deal with bullying, wherever it is encountered, by encouraging them, as a community, to develop and agree to uphold codes of conduct. Adults can also provide young people with support and tools to actively address bullying behaviour.



The Canadian Federation of Teachers has developed a *CyberTips* guide for teachers that can be viewed or downloaded at: http://www.cft-fce.ca/publications/pd_newsletter/PD2008_Volume7-2English_Article9.pdf.

Helping Students Take Action

Just as students need to understand that online bullying may be a criminal act, it is also important for them to understand their own responsibilities as “Netizens” in building and contributing to positive online communities. Teachers and parents have an essential role to play in helping young people develop their own moral compasses to guide their online behaviour. The following rules can be used as a starting point to help students develop a code for ethical conduct online, to encourage positive online interactions, and to help them respond proactively if they find themselves targeted by a cyberbully.

1. Protect your privacy, and respect the privacy of others: don't give out your personal information and avoid spreading rumours or posting any information or photo on the Web without first obtaining permission from the person who provided it.
2. Respect people's virtual space: don't go digging through someone's files or computer.
3. Stay true to yourself: do not send anonymous personal messages.
4. Stay true to your values in cyberspace: never write something that you wouldn't say to someone's face. Before you decide to send someone an aggressive message, sleep on it.
5. Don't behave like a troll (someone who posts controversial messages in an online discussion with the intention of baiting other users and pitting them against each other).¹⁰

If you witness bullying online:

1. Stand up to the perpetrator: speak out every time that friends cyberbully someone and every time you witness aggressive behaviour against a person online. Criticism from friends usually carries more weight than when it comes from parents.
2. Don't be a doormat! If someone asks you to spread an offending message, photo or video about someone, refuse to do it!

If you are the target of cyberbullying, use the four-step STOP process:

1. **STOP**—immediately leave the online environment or activity where bullying is going on (chat room, forum, game, instant messenger, etc.).
2. **BLOCK** emails or instant messages received from the perpetrator. NEVER RESPOND.
3. **RECORD** all harassing messages and send them to your Internet provider (Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.). Most providers have policies about users harassing people on their server.
4. **TALK** about it to a trusted adult; alert the police when bullying involves physical threats.



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- 3 F. Mishna, "Cyber Bullying Report." Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, March 2008.
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- 5 A. Lenhart, "Data Memo: Cyberbullying and Online Teens." Pew Internet & American Life Project, June 27, 2007. <http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2007/PIP%20Cyberbullying%20Memo.pdf.pdf>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 S. Shariff and R. Gouin (2005).
- 8 S. Shariff and L. Johnny, "Cyber-libel and cyber-bullying: Can Schools Protect Student Reputations and Free-expression in Virtual Environments?" *Education & Law Journal*, 16 (2007), pp. 307-42.
- 9 J. Pearson and D. Kordich Hall, "Reaching IN ... Reaching Out Resiliency Guidebook.." Child & Family Partnership, 2006, p. 5. <http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/documents/Guidebook%20-%20Guide2.pdf>.



Parents' Guide to Cyberbullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a specific relationship characterized by recurrent abuse of power by a person (or group) over another person. Bullying is expressed differently depending on the age of the abuser.

What is Cyberbullying?

As its name implies, cyberbullying is bullying through an electronic medium, such as a computer or cell phone.

The Internet's reach and perceived anonymity means that children who might not otherwise initiate bullying may initiate this sort of behaviour, and an unlimited number of young people may become bystanders who perpetuate the victimization as they read and forward harassing messages and/or images.

It is extremely important that young people learn how to respond to cyberbullying. Adults can help.

How Do I Know Whether or Not my Child is a Target of Cyberbullying?

Signs that your child is being bullied online include fear of using the computer or going to school, anxiety and psychological distress, and withdrawal from friends and usual activities.

What Should I do If my Child is Targeted?

- Report the cyberbullying to your local police. The abuser is probably breaking other laws, too.
- You can also call the tip line at the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association: 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
- Meet with school officials if your child is being bullied by a peer at school.
- File a complaint:
 - For bullying using email or instant messaging (IM), contact the Internet Service Provider (ISP) of the perpetrator at <contact@ispname> or <abuse@ispname>. Forward offending emails or IM message logs to the ISP with your complaint.
 - For bullying material posted on a website, use the Contact Us section of the site and ask to have the material removed.
 - For bullying through a cell phone, have your service provider trace the call and contact the perpetrator's service provider.

How Can I Prevent Cyberbullying?

As a large portion of cyberbullying occurs in the home, you must get better informed about your children's online activities. Get involved and talk to your child about behaving ethically online.

Establish rules regarding appropriate Internet use. MediaSmarts' research shows that these rules have a very positive impact on your children's online behaviour. You can consult MediaSmarts' resources on developing household Internet rules at http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/tipsheet/TipSheet_FamilyOnlineRules.pdf.



Urge your children to come to you as soon as they feel uncomfortable or threatened online.

What Should I Avoid Doing if my Child is a Target of Cyberbullying?

It can be difficult for a young person to come forward when being bullied; even to mum or dad. To foster a climate of trust, do not overreact. Do not forbid your child to use the Internet in the hope of eliminating the source of the problem: for your child, this is the equivalent of social death and will leave her or him feeling even more victimized (not to mention the fact that an extreme reaction such as this will probably cause your child to avoid confiding in you again when feeling threatened).

How Can I Learn More?

As much as possible, show an interest in your child's online life: where does he or she go online? What does he or she do? What is it about these online experiences that are so absorbing? If you're in the habit of sharing your own online experiences with your child, she or he will be more likely to talk to you when having a negative experience.

If you want to better understand your child's online experience, visit MediaSmarts' BeWebAware site at: <http://www.bewebaware.ca>.

