

The Realities of the Cyber World

Instant communication is at a child's or teen's fingertips, with the use of cell phones and computers. Cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, social networking pages, and "tweets" have become the prevalent modes of communication.

These technologies are very useful and powerful sources of information and communication. However, the potential for anonymous communication, the rapid transmission of information (including photographic images) and the ability to transform images and data have contributed to an increase in cyber bullying.

As these technologies continue to evolve, we must educate ourselves and work together to ensure that our children are using these technologies responsibly and safely, to avoid instances of cyber bullying.

Some acts of bullying or cyber bullying may also constitute criminal acts and may result in investigation and prosecution by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office.



How We Can Help

The Middlesex District Attorney's Office's Family Protection Bureau and Cyber Protection Program, in connection with Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc. is available to help.

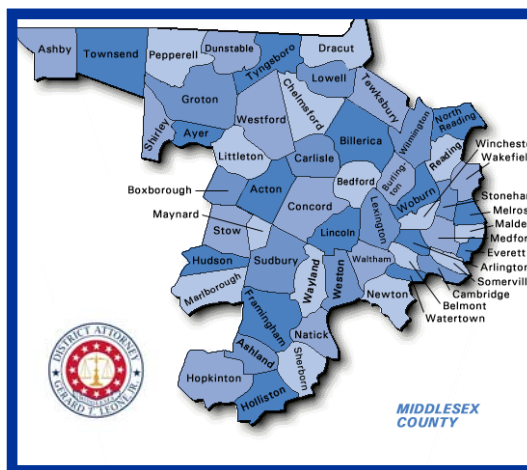
The Family Protection Bureau, comprised of the child, elder and domestic abuse units, investigates and prosecutes crimes in these areas. If there is a cyber component involved, the Middlesex District Attorney's Cyber Protection Program may also assist with the case. If you have questions, please call (781) 897-8400.

Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc., with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, provides educational and prevention trainings for school districts and parents throughout Middlesex County on bullying and cyber bullying. To find out more on the scope of services please call (781) 897-6800.

Visit the following Web sites
for more information on these programs

www.middlesexda.com

www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org



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STOP

the Bullying



**Middlesex District Attorney
Gerry Leone**

Office of the District Attorney
15 Commonwealth Avenue
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 897-8300
www.middlesexda.com

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
MIDDLESEX PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH, INC.**

www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org



One of the greatest challenges we face in creating a positive and safe learning environment in our schools is the prevalence of bullying. In fact, it is estimated that more than 5.7 million children across the United States, 30% of all students, have been impacted by bullying, as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both.

Why is this significant? In short, we believe that bullying is the root cause of a large percentage of the violence and dysfunction that we see within and outside of our schools.

Those children who are being bullied—whether through verbal abuse, cyber bullying, or physical abuse—may suffer in silence, or at some point are likely to respond and act out themselves. An unsafe school environment occurs due to the actual acts of bullying, and an unhealthy school environment is created by the effects of bullying and potential reaction of many students who are victims.

We hope that this brochure will help you better identify, prevent, and respond to incidents of bullying. By working together as a community, we hope that we can foster a climate of tolerance and respect by and for all of our children.

Gerard Leone

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when a person and/or group of people repeatedly and intentionally harm or threaten to harm someone who they assume to be weaker or vulnerable.

Bullying can involve a wide variety of behaviors, from direct attacks (such as hitting, threatening, or intimidating, maliciously teasing and taunting, name-calling, sexual remarks, and stealing or damaging belongings) to more subtle, indirect attacks (such as spreading rumors or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone). Bullying may occur through physical abuse, verbal abuse or electronic means, such as cell phones or computers (referred to as cyber bullying).

*Children have the
right to feel safe
in school and
out of school*



Possible Signs of Bullying

- Avoiding certain situations, people, or places
- Exhibiting changes in behavior, such as being withdrawn and passive, being overly active and aggressive, or being self-destructive
- Crying or showing other signs of depression or anxiety
- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Showing signs of fear when around or asked about certain situations or people

- Having unexplained injuries, torn or missing clothes or damage to personal property such as toys, games, book bag, etc.
- Demonstrating apparent psychosomatic symptoms such as stomach pains, fatigue and sleep disturbance which may be caused by anxiety or depression



What Parents Can/ Should Do

If You Suspect Your Child is Being Bullied

- Gather more information
- Monitor your child's activities and relationships with others, especially at times when observation is not expected
- Supervise and review electronic communication like the Internet, social networking sites, and cell phones
- Inquire about and know the school's policy regarding bullying and harassment
- Do not attempt to mediate the situation on your own by bringing victim and bully together and/or contacting the parents of the suspected bully
- Communicate your concerns and seek out support from school administrators, law enforcement and others to develop a collaborative plan to address the issue, if necessary.

If You Suspect Your Child is a Bully

- Address the behaviors openly with your child
- Let your child know bullying is unacceptable
- Develop firm and clear rules for behavior
- Follow up with praise for compliance, and consequences for noncompliance
- Model appropriate behaviors for your child, **LEAD BY EXAMPLE**