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Free lessons offer cyber-bullying prevention

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Free lessons offer cyber-bullying prevention
CyberSmart! offers K-12 schools a research-based curriculum to help prevent cyber harassment
By Meris Stansbury, Associate Editor

Primary Topic Channel: Safety & security

As cyber bullying becomes more prevalent among students, educators are looking for help in teaching their students about appropriate online behavior. To meet this need, New Jersey-based CyberSmart! Education has released a free, research-based cyber bullying curriculum for K-12 schools.

Developed using best practices from the fields of cyber security, school violence prevention, and character education, the CyberSmart! Cyberbullying Package doesn't rely on fear tactics that have been proven not to work, its creators say.

Instead, it focuses on developing critical thinking and decision-making skills, guiding students to define the problems and issues themselves and take ownership of them to effect real change. "Without this ownership, no behavioral change can occur," CyberSmart! says.

The curriculum's lessons are non-sequential and can stand on their own. They're designed to be integrated into the existing curriculum and include free student-activity sheets.

Units include:

[S] Safety and Security Online
[M] Manners, Cyberbullying, and Ethics
[A] Authentic Learning and Creativity
[R] Research and Information Fluency
[T] Twenty-First Century Challenges

These standards-based lessons can be sorted by grade level and are aligned with national and state technology and information literacy standards, CyberSmart! says. Lessons also include tips and resources for using Web 2.0 tools (wikis, blogging), as well as supportive materials (posters and videos) and educator testimonials.

Perhaps one of the most important features of the curriculum is the "Home Connection" section of each unit, CyberSmart! says--materials that let educators inform parents or guardians and enlist their support by providing a framework for family dialogue about online safety and security.

"School psychologists can work with teachers to incorporate these lessons into class work as well as into school-wide bullying prevention programming," said Susan Gorin, executive director of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). "The companion parent resources equip parents with valuable information on cyber-bullying prevention and can help improve home-school collaboration around the effort to improve children's safe, ethical use of

the internet."

The suite of K-12 lessons is being offered to schools free of charge in partnership with the National School Boards Association's Technology Leadership Network, the Character Education Partnership, NASP, and the National Cyber Security Alliance.

"The four preeminent educational organizations distributing this program reach into nearly every school and community in the U.S.," said James Teicher, CEO of CyberSmart!. "Our message is that cyber bullying can be proactively addressed by schools at the same time they embrace the use of online tools and resources to engage students, foster 21st-century skills, and prepare our children to achieve in today's digital society."

The cyber-bullying package also includes prevention activities that extend classroom learning out into the community, CyberSmart! says.

"Research indicates that only a small percentage of schools have adopted curriculum to address cyber bullying," said Michael Kaiser, executive director of the National Cyber Security Alliance. "CyberSmart!'s research-based curriculum provides an easy way for K-12 educators to get started in the prevention of cyber bullying by providing immediate access to high-quality materials for the classroom, families, and the community."

Links:

CyberSmart!

CyberSmart! Cyberbullying Package

Note to readers:

Don't forget to visit the **Measuring 21st-century skills** *resource center. Graduates who enter the workplace with a solid grasp of 21st-century skills bring value to both the workplace and global marketplace. Go to:* *Measuring 21st-century skills*

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