

StopCyberbullying.org Toolkit and the Megan Pledge Program

StopCyberbullying is a program of WiredSafety.org, a 501c-3 charity and outreach, education and help group on all cyber-risk issues for all ages. WiredSafety operates largely through its corps of grassroots volunteers, ranging from its youngest Tweenangels (7-12years) to its oldest WiredSafety help team member (89 Years). Without the large administrative costs of maintaining a brick and mortar office and staff, WiredSafety.org can put the donations to work directly in the programs. Only a handful of staff are compensated. The rest are unpaid volunteer. And all paid staff create and deliver programs. No one is funded in an administrative capacity alone. All money goes to the programs.

The Stop Cyberbullying Toolkit will be created in several different versions. Initially, one for public schools will be created to provide powerpoint and other presentation materials that can be used in group assemblies, classroom materials and activities that can be dropped into an otherwise packed school day, to reinforce the message that cyberbullying hurts and has to be stopped. It will provide printable materials for student handouts, parents awareness and for the community at large. The materials and program will be directed at four distinct age groups - K-4th, 5-6th, 7-9th and 10th-12th grades. Animations, videos and other multi-media resources will be provided, along with guides written for the students and other written for parents and school administrators. It will include cyber-fairytales, using the well-known and loved stories with a new modern cyber-twist. It will use the popular Sumo-Wrestling Pandas for the younger set, the Super Safe Kiddo series for the preteens. It will use Teenangels animations and videos for the middle schoolers and videos and real life stories for the high schoolers.

The toolkit will provide all of the information a school community needs. But it will also provide young people with a mission. Through the Megan Pledge, they can take a stand against cyberbullying. By taking the pledge (including signing it and mailing it to WiredSafety), they promise to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. These promises are made in honor of Megan Meier, a little thirteen year old who killed herself rather than face ongoing harassment at the hands of a local mother posing as a sixteen year old boy. Over a barrage of hateful and cruel messages, ending with one that told her "the world would be better off without you!" she hanged herself in her closet. Instead of celebrating her fourteenth birthday a week later, her friends attended her funeral.

WiredSafety hopes that with the help of Megan's mom, Tina Meier, and all our Teenangels and Tweenangels and youth volunteers, that 1 million students will take the pledge before the end of the year. The toolkit will include all the information they need to set up their own Megan Pledge campaign and make a difference. It is hoped that ISPs, social networks and gaming sites will join in helping spread the word on the Megan Pledge too.

The entire StopCyberbullying.org program is designed to motivate students and their parents to do something, not just stand there while others are hurt. It gives them the tools and information that they need to create their own grass-roots campaign and take a stand against cyberbullying wherever they find it.

Students will be encouraged to do research within their schools and communities on the scope of the problem and work in their community to address what they discover. The toolkit and especially The Megan Pledge program are designed to empower young people, not just lecture them.

The toolkit will include other activities that students can do to make a difference. It will include guides for peer-counseling groups and a first responder checklist for school risk managers, as well. Posters, PSAs and press release kits are part of the toolkit, also.

A second version of the toolkit will have the materials available in Spanish, as well as English. And one toolkit will be created just for community policing officers and school resource officers, which will include the law enforcement investigators guides to the major networks and contact information for the major ISPs to enable them to act quickly after-hours when a child is at risk.