

March 5, 2010

Dear Parents,

You may have heard about cyber-bullying in the news recently. It has become an important issue for many children and their families. As Internet and cell phone use have become an integral part of our daily lives, abuses of these technologies have also grown. In order to educate our students in ways to prevent this type of abuse, the seventh and eighth grade classes will be taking part in a cyber-bullying prevention curriculum provided through Hazelden, publisher of the diocesan-approved "Slick Tracy" program used with our sixth graders.

This cyber-bullying prevention curriculum includes eight sessions designed to teach students how to recognize cyber-bullying, how cyber-bullying affects students and the school community, how to prevent cyber-bullying from happening, and what to do if it does happen to them or to people they know.

Students will be engaged in classroom discussions and small-group activities and projects to gain an understanding of how cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, social networking sites (including Facebook), and e-mail can be abused, and what they can do about it. Students will identify how to use the Internet and cell phones in positive ways. They will also be encouraged to develop a sense of empathy for students who are bullied, whether in the traditional sense or cyber-bullied.

Cyber-bullying is a matter that concerns us at school and is also a matter that needs to be discussed at home. This program includes a parent/guardian component. I hope you will take the time to read the materials that will be brought home and to do the homework activities with your child. Included in this homework are some websites that you and your child could visit together to learn more about what you can do to increase Internet safety and prevent cyber-bullying. Your child will be graded on these homework assignments, so please be sure to sign them when completed. Your child's Religion pass/fail grade will reflect his/her participation in the program. The homework will be posted on Edline under Religion class.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this program:
jackie.gelardi@stfrancisfortmyers.org or 334-7707 x 234.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Gelardi
SFX School Counselor