



CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION
A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition
Supported By Centre County Drug and Alcohol



June 16, 2010 – Attorney General on Cyberbullying

Tom Corbett is the Pennsylvania Attorney General. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care* serving the State College Area School District.

As children, we were all taught the expression: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Sadly, we know this statement is not true. A broken bone will heal; but the effects of bullying can last a lifetime.

Every day, many children are afraid to go to school; not because of a big test or because of incomplete homework, but because they are being bullied by their classmates.

These days, bullying has taken on a new form, and we think its effects are much more severe. Bullying is no longer a shove on the playground. Those bruises will heal. Instead, a new type of bullying, called cyberbullying, is threatening the safety and well-being of our children.

Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic devices to harass, intimidate or threaten others. Cyberbullies are able to use chat rooms, social networking sites, texting and emails 24 hours a day, seven days a week, making their victim a perpetual target. There is nowhere to go to escape.

We need to find these cyberbullies and we need to stop them. We need to teach our children that it is never acceptable to disrespect and hurt others while hiding behind a computer screen.

In the Attorney General’s office, we believe that education leads to prevention. That’s why we have created a new program called “Sticks and Stones.”

The purpose of the program is to provide children with the information they need to stop the bullying. We also stress that when a child knows about another being bullied, staying silent and doing nothing is not an option.

We offer cost-free presentations to schools, community groups and parents. The only way to stop this epidemic of cyberbullying is to work together.

Parents need to get involved and know what their children are doing online.

Schools need to take these matters seriously and send a strong message to those who bully.

Victims need to know that they are not alone and can go to a parent, a teacher, a school counselor or a friend for help.

Talk to your children. Find out what the bullying policies are at their schools and learn about your children's online activity. We can make a difference and we can stop cyberbullying.

For more information about the Sticks and Stones program, or other educational programs, please contact my Education & Outreach Unit at 1-800-525-7642 or visit our website at www.attorneygeneral.gov.

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