CYBER BULLYING - PROTECTING YOUR CHILD

Talk to your child about cyber bullying. Make sure you keep an open dialogue so he/she feels comfortable coming to you with any issues.

Be familiar with your child's interactions with friends and others. While cyber bullying can be caused by a random person (and thus difficult to prepare for) trouble with friends and others in your child's social circle can also lead to cyber bullying.

Teach your child not to respond to cyber bullies. Bullies enjoy the response; by not responding, that may encourage them to move on.

Limit the amount of information your child shares online. Bullies can use multiple methods of communication to taunt or harass; by limiting your child's exposure, you make it easier to limit a bully's access. This may also limit the chance of a random cyber-bullying incident.

If the bullying is a problem, consider closing down the particular point of access. Email, instant message accounts and even some phone companies allow you to block specific user names or phone numbers. Most companies will even let you change cell phone numbers, email addresses and instant message accounts if needed.

If your children are being harassed or threatened, report the activity. Many schools have instituted bullying programs, so school officials may have established policies for handling incidents. If necessary, contact your local law enforcement.