



Dear Harborside Parents,

At a recent PTSO meeting, I shared with our parents that I was concerned about things that we sometimes hear kids talking about. 90% of our kids seem to always do the right thing and make outstanding choices. However, there are also some kids that I fear make decisions that expose them to dangerous situations. These situations are often sensitive in nature and are best handled at home as a family discussion.

We have great kids at Harborside, but high school students sometimes seem to think that they are invincible. Please accept these messages that come home as simple suggestions that adults might ask their students about. I am in no way suggesting that your child is participating in any of these activities, but I am saying that I worry about teens in Kenosha who might be. Maybe your child is aware of others that are participating in these dangerous behaviors. Maybe it is upsetting just for your student to hear other teenagers talk about these situations and they would appreciate some adult guidance, but do not know how to ask.

Thanks for being great for our kids!
Mr. Haithcock

Pete's Tough Topic for November!

We live in a world where adults have been described by some as technology immigrants. Our students, are native to and grew up in this technological world. This has expanded our students' world and created comforts that adults only dreamed of as high school students. However, it has also created a new world of dangers for today's students.

----- Pete wants to know, "Are all Harborside students are using technology in a safe manner?"

Internet Safety: (Do you know how often it is a problem???)

According to www.netsmartz.org:

- Teens have established significant presence on social networking web pages: 61% of 13- to 17-year-olds have a personal profile on a site such as MySpace, Friendster, or Xanga. Half have also posted pictures of themselves online.
 - Older teens (16-17s) and girls especially use the Internet for social interaction, meeting friends, and networking.
- However, many have also been exposed to the Internet's accompanying potential risks.
 - 71% reported receiving messages online from someone they don't know.

- 45% have been asked for personal information by someone they don't know.
- 30% have considered meeting someone that they've only talked to online
- 14% have actually met a person face-to-face they they've only spoken to over the Internet

Cyber bullying: *(Do you know what to do?)*

According to www.isafe.org

- 42% of kids have been bullied while online. 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once.
- 35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.
- 21% of kids have received mean or threatening e-mail or other messages.
- 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.
- 53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than 1 in 3 have done it more than once.
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

Based on 2004 i-SAFE survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8

Cyber Bullying Tips

- Tell a trusted adult about the bullying, and keep telling until the adult takes action.
- Don't open or read messages by cyber bullies.
- Tell your school if it is school related. Schools have a bullying solution in place.
- Don't erase the messages—they may be needed to take action.
- Protect yourself—never agree to meet with the person or with anyone you meet online.
- If bullied through chat or instant messaging, the "bully" can often be blocked.
- If you are threatened with harm, inform the local police.

Sexting: *(Do you even know what sexting is? It says 20% of teens have participated! What!?!?!?!?)*

Here is the headline and the first few lines of an article printed on Jan. 15, 2009 by CBS News.

"Sexting" Shockingly Common Among Teens

Latest Case Involves Three Teen Girls In Pa. Who Sent Nude Pics To Three Boys.

(CBS/ AP) While it may be shocking, the practice of "sexting" - sending nude pictures via text message - is not unusual, especially for high schoolers around the country.

This week, three teenage girls who allegedly sent nude or semi-nude cell phone pictures of themselves, and three male classmates in a western Pennsylvania high school who received them, **are charged with child pornography.**

In October a Texas eighth-grader spent the night in a juvenile detention center after his football coach found a nude picture on his cell phone that a fellow student sent him.

Roughly 20 percent of teens admit to participating in "sexting," according to a [nationwide survey \(pdf\)](#) by the National Campaign to Support Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

"This is a serious felony. They could be facing many years in prison," **CBS News legal analyst Lisa Bloom** said of the six teens in Pennsylvania.

Please talk to our students at home. Make them aware of the dangers of on-line predators, teach them what to do if they are exposed to cyber-bullying and please make sure they understand the significance of "sexting". Kids in our country are forwarding pictures of minors around like it is a joke when in fact, it is a very serious felony.

Your friend,

Pirate Pete