

Mrs. Justine Plocher: School Counselor

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*Counseling services are available for children and families.*

*Please contact me for zoom, in person, and phone sessions.*

## **OCTOBER 14<sup>TH</sup> IS NATIONAL STOP BULLYING DAY**

The American Psychological Association defines bullying as “a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort.”

Bullying comes in many forms such as verbal, physical, relational, and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is on the rise as children spend more leisure time online, are isolated, bored, and feeling more stressed. Stopbullying.gov suggests the following warning signs that a child is being cyberbullied or is cyberbullying others:

- Noticeable increases or decreases in device use, including texting.
- A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device.
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near, and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device.
- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear.
- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past.
- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed, or loses interest in people and activities.

Parents can help by being aware of what your child is doing online such as monitoring your child’s internet use, apps, social media accounts, and online gaming. The following are some strategies for parents to provide support to children who may be involved in cyberbullying:

- Recognize there has been a change in mood or behavior and explore with your child what might be the cause.
- Ask questions about what is happening and who might be involved
- Tell them they did the right thing by coming to you
- Listen to your child and validate their feelings
- Tell them it isn’t their fault and restore their confidence
- Put the bully on block
- Flag the incident online and report to your school if it involves a classmate
- Seek help from a professional if your child seems withdrawn or distressed