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# SHOULD SCHOOLS PROTECT KIDS FROM CYBERBULLYING?

Word Generation - Unit 3.16

## Focus Words

anonymous | underlying | capacity | adequately | harassment

## Weekly Passage

Sixteen-year-old Megan Meier was thrilled when she started chatting with Josh Evans on Facebook. Before she had been sad and lonely, but Josh was good-looking and very kind to her. He even told her that she was his “number one.” However, one day Josh’s messages suddenly turned from nice to cruel. Megan was devastated. She was so hurt and upset by the way he treated her that she committed suicide. Later, Megan’s parents learned that Josh Evans was not a real person. Neighbors had created the false profile to harass Megan.

Whereas bullying has existed in schools for years, cyberbullying is a new method that bullies use to harm their victims. Cyberbullies use text messages, instant messages, email, or sites like Facebook to send harmful messages. Cyberbullying also includes spreading rumors and manipulating photographs online.

Cyberbullying is especially common among middle school students. An estimated 42% of middle school students are involved in cyberbullying either as a bully or as a victim. When a child is having problems in school, cyberbullying can be an underlying cause. Students who are bullied online

may be afraid to come to school, participate in class, talk to their peers, or go to recess. When people are afraid, they are less able to learn.

Perhaps schools should get involved to help stop cyberbullying. Some say school police officers should investigate cyberbullying as a crime of harassment. Others say teachers should talk with students about cyberbullying. Class discussions could address how to stay safe on the internet, how to handle cyberbullies, and where to get help if you are hurt by cyberbullies.

Some people say schools should only be concerned with what happens at school, not with what happens out of school. They point out that schools have limited resources and do not have the capacity to adequately address cyberbullying. Since many of the harmful comments come from anonymous sources, teachers and principals do not have time to investigate who the cyberbullies are. Besides, some people say parents are the only people responsible for keeping teens safe on the internet. Do you think schools should protect kids from cyberbullying?

