HOW TO SPOT AND STOP
CYBERBULLYING

We are constantly connected through our smartphones and social media apps. While these tools are valuable, they leave students open to cyberbullying, which is any form of harassment by electronic or digital means. Here are some tips for parents and guardians on how to identify when your child is being cyberbullied and how you can help.

WHERE IT HAPPENS
Social media apps like TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and others are a common place for cyberbullying, but it can also take place via messaging apps like WhatsApp or even video game chat services like Discord.

WHAT IT INCLUDES
Any content someone shares that is negative, harmful, mean or false about another person can be considered cyberbullying, including sharing personal information or trying to cause embarrassment or humiliation.

MENTAL HEALTH
Being a victim of cyberbullying can have a significant impact on one's mental health. Cyberbullying is directly correlated to increases in depression, anxiety, sleep issues, decreased academic performance and more.

ONLINE GAMING
Approximately 70% of all youth play video games, which can have cognitive and social benefits. But online gaming can foster bullying. Parents should know who their kids are playing with and how to set privacy controls.

EDUCATE
Prevention is a key tool to stop cyberbullying. Have conversations with kids about proper behavior online, educate kids on what's appropriate to share and the importance of privacy, and research the purpose and security of popular apps.

DOCUMENT
If you suspect cyberbullying, keep evidence. Save and print screenshots of messages with names, usernames, dates and times. Stop responding to the bully and block them if the app allows you to do so.

REPORT
Cyberbullying is against the terms of most social media apps. If you have documented cyberbullying on a social media or messaging app, report it via the app's support tool. If your child is being cyberbullied by a fellow Steel Valley student, please report it to your building principal so appropriate action can be taken. There are consequences for Steel Valley students who are caught cyberbullying another student. Extreme cyberbullying that involves threats of violence or sexually explicit material should be reported to the police, as those actions are considered criminal.