



## BC Crime Prevention Association

#275 - 6450 Roberts Street, Burnaby, BC V5G 4E1

Tel: 604-291-9959 • Fax: 604-291-9951 • E-mail: [info@bccpa.org](mailto:info@bccpa.org) • [www.bccpa.org](http://www.bccpa.org)

Q. I discovered that my 10yr old daughter has been receiving text messages on her cell phone and they're really insulting. The messages say that she is fat, a loser, and that nobody wants to be her friend. I don't know who is sending them. She is very upset about this and it is affecting her to the point that some days she doesn't want to go to school.

What can I do to stop them?

*Concerned parent*

A. These kinds of messages are examples of cyber-bullying that occurs with the use of cell phones, instant-messaging programs, Internet chat rooms, social networking websites and e-mail. No matter which medium is used, some young people find it easy to harass and tease other youth this way because it can be anonymous but have devastating consequences for the victims of these attacks.

With respect to the specific use of cell phones, we recommend you contact the service provider to ask if there are ways to block text messaging from being delivered to your daughter's cellphone. Some service providers have introduced new fees for incoming text messages so there is also a financial incentive to stop cell phones from receiving any text messages.

Under some circumstances, repeated cyber-bullying text messages could amount to criminal harassment and you may wish to consider seeking advice from your local police department.

We also suggest you counsel your daughter to reduce the number of people who have her cellphone number. You will find many excellent resources on the general topic of cyber-bullying by conducting a Google search. A good example of an informative website is: <http://www.cyberbullying.ca/> with links to other resources – see "RELATED RESOURCES."

Cyberbullying is a growing and disturbing phenomenon. Expect to see it discussed in several public forums in the near future including the BC Crime Prevention Association Annual Training Symposium in October 2008 (see <http://www.bccpa.org/symposium/workshops.htm>)