It’s cool to be kind!

Our youth have so many things to be concerned about today...academics, athletics, family expectations, religious convictions, social acceptance, driving, and simply being a kid. One thing our children can do to be a part of the solution to reduce the amount and level of anxiety over such issues is follow life’s golden rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Obviously, this is easier said than done; however, it comes down to making simple choices of being kind or not.

If we all could think about what we say or do before we say or do things, most of us will make the more appropriate choice that benefits not only ourselves but everyone else around us. Taking a step back from most situations, even for a brief moment, and considering the “big picture” provides time for options to be formulated and creating a more positive outcome in most circumstances.

You might be asking yourself, why is Officer Sheldon going philosophical on us right now? Well, the point of the matter is that many of our youth in the Lake Oswego School District struggle with bullying in a social atmosphere. Gone are the days of physical bullying that many of us parents grew up with, although that still happens occasionally. Modern bullying is so much easier and less physically confrontational due to technology and social media.

I encourage all parents to understand what devices their children are using, how their using the technology, and increase the level of involvement with their children’s lives in general. It can be very easy for parents to get busy and not pay attention to ALL the things their children are doing on their phones, tablets, or computers. How our kids use technology to communicate can often seem very confusing and foreign to many parents these days, but the reality is that our kids use technology as a necessity in their daily lives. If the kids don’t have the right tools, resources, and support from their parents or trusted adults, our children can fall victim to being “cyber-bullied” or “cyber-bullying” others very quickly.

Social media is a great way for staying connected to family, friends, and other people in our lives that may even live a long distance away. However, if not used responsibly, social media can be used to tear down another person, result in negative consequences to educational and professional aspirations for the future, or possibly cause that user to commit crimes that could have serious legal repercussions.

One of my priorities as the School Resource Officer is to ensure the safety of our students in and out of school so their learning environment stays constructive and productive. A big part of how I can do this is through the education of our students, staff, and parents within our community. If you don’t know what SafeOregon is, I highly recommend that all of our youth and their families familiarize themselves with www.safeoregon.com. It is just another way for students, staff, and parents can report something that can be considered a potential safety hazard as it relates to our schools, i.e. cyber-bullying, threat of physical harm, weapons, drugs and alcohol, and others. These tip submissions alert me and other school staff immediately so the issue can be dealt with as necessary. Reporters can remain anonymous if they desire, but they can be assured that the issue will be handled promptly and appropriately.

Finally, open the lines of communication with your children if you’re parents with your parents if you’re a student. I encourage all students and parents to reach out to me at any time you may have questions, concerns, or just want to talk about things related to the continued goal that our kids have the best educational experience while in the Lake Oswego School District. If anyone would like to learn more
about Digital Safety, I teach a 1 hour or 3 hour course that has a parent version and a student version. Small groups or large groups can be accommodated, so email me if you’re interested. Stay safe, and know that our students, parents, and staff have my support along with the support from the rest of the Lake Oswego Police Department and the entire staff within the Lake Oswego School District.

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