

**Cyberbullying Prevention Webcast**

**November 12, 2012 - Louis St Laurent Junior/Senior High School, Edmonton**

**Hon Dave Hancock, Minister, Human Services**

Thank you and good evening.

Acknowledgments: Prevention of Bullying Youth Committee (co-hosts), and panellists.

It's wonderful to be here – live from Louis St. Laurent Junior and Senior High School, in Edmonton, Alberta.

I am pleased to bring greetings on behalf of Premier Redford, Minister of Education Jeff Johnson – and all of my colleagues from the Alberta Legislature.

Welcome to all parents, teachers and youth who are here in person, or watching online.

We've come together, tonight, with shared values and a common purpose.

We believe that the every life is precious.

That every person must be treated with kindness, and dignity.

We want caring, respectful and safe homes, schools, communities and workplaces.

We've seen the pain and anguish that bullying has on children, youth and adults.

We believe that bullying should never be considered 'just a normal part of life.'

And – most importantly – we're committed to working together to stop bullying and promote healthy and positive relationships in our province.

This is a special opportunity for us to learn more about cyberbullying and ways we can help friends or family members stay safe online.

Cyberbullying isn't new – but it may be new for a lot of parents.

Chances are ... it wasn't around when you were growing up.

The explosion of cell phones and social media over the past decade has brought the issue to the forefront.

More than 60% of Albertans surveyed in 2012 said they think that cyberbullying occurs 'a lot' or 'a fair bit' in their own community.

Educating ourselves and our children...

... and talking about the issue with community members will drive effective solutions forward.

Technology and social media makes it easier for bullies to hurt others – quickly and anonymously, with a touch of a few buttons.

But, as we'll discuss tonight, the internet can also be a great way to support and be kind to others.

We launched Alberta's bullying prevention strategy in 2005 – together with communities and schools.

Our public education and awareness efforts have included:

a toll-free Bullying Helpline;

online resources like [b-free.ca](http://b-free.ca) and [bullyfreealberta.ca](http://bullyfreealberta.ca) for youth and parents;

support for our prevention of bullying youth committee;

and community outreach programs like Roots of Empathy and partnerships between schools and parent link centres.

We remain committed to working with schools and communities to help prevent bullying.

But we need your help.

We know that bullying is a learned behaviour.

But so is love and compassion.

How we treat our neighbours, friends, colleagues and family members – in person and online – sets an example for others to live by.

Our kids and our community look up to you.

Your position as caring mentors and role models is so important.

Through your words and actions, you have the power to help create caring and respectful schools and communities in our province.

Tonight, we turn the mic over to you and our expert panellists for an open and honest discussion.

I am excited to hear your questions and suggestions about how we can all take a stand against cyberbullying.

Thank you so much for your participation this evening, and for your commitment to making our province a safe and welcoming place – where all Albertans are respected and able to live in dignity.

Before we begin, I am pleased introduce a special video message from Premier Alison Redford ... and a conversation she had with children and youth at Parkview School about bullying prevention.

I think it will help set the stage for tonight's webcast.