



Name(s) _____

Class _____

Date _____

Directions

Read the story of Sondra below. Answer the questions that follow.

Sondra is planning a sleepover to celebrate her birthday. Her parents have set a limit of eight girls, so Sondra can't invite everyone she'd like. Two girls who are left out overhear the plans. Angry, they plan their revenge.

The girls create a "We Hate Sondra Jones" website. They say that anyone invited to the party should not go. They tell everyone in school the site's address. The girls invite everyone to add new reasons why they hate Sondra and to spread ugly rumors about her.

When Sondra hears about the site, she gets a sick feeling in her stomach. Unable to ignore the site, she checks it often. Each day she finds a new nasty comment or mean joke about her. She feels hurt and powerless to defend herself. Sondra is too embarrassed to go to school and tells her parents she is sick.

Who are the cyberbullies? _____ Who is the target? _____

Is this a cyberbullying situation? Why or why not? _____

How do you think Sondra feels? _____

Why do you think the two girls made the mean website about Sondra?

Imagine someone saying they hate you in front of a bunch of kids at school. Now imagine someone doing the same thing on the Internet. How are these two situations similar? How are they different? _____

What advice would you give Sondra about how to handle the situation? (Read, "Use Common Sense!" on page two.) _____



What do you think the people who are bullying Sondra would say about their behavior? _____

Feeling Uncomfortable

Although going on the Internet can be fun, some online experiences may make you feel embarrassed, upset, depressed, or afraid. It can happen to anyone, even when you're online sitting comfortably in your own home or favorite library. When it happens, it's best to take constructive action.

Recognizing Cyberbullying

Sondra is the target of cyberbullying. Whether bullies are face to face or online, they feel powerful when they intimidate other people. They may use hurtful words or make threats. Often the cyberbully is someone you know face to face. Perhaps the bully finds it easier to be mean and nasty online, when he or she can't see the other person's reaction. Online or off, bullying is meant to make you feel uncomfortable. Either way, it's upsetting.

Use Common Sense

Here are some tips about how to handle a cyberbullying situation:

- *Sign off the computer. It's best to ignore attacks and walk away from the cyberbully.*
- *Don't respond or retaliate. If you are angry and reply, then you might say nasty things. Cyberbullies often just want to get a reaction out of you so don't let them know that their plan has worked.*
- *Block the bully. If you get mean messages through IM or a social networking site, you should take the person off your buddy or friends list. You can also just delete messages from bullies without reading them.*
- *Save and print bullying messages. These could be important evidence to show your parents or teachers if the bullying does not stop.*
- *Talk to a friend. When someone makes you feel bad, sometimes it can help to talk the situation over with a friend.*
- *Tell a trusted adult. (A trusted adult is someone who you believe will listen and has the skills, desire, and authority to help you.) Telling an adult isn't tattling. It's standing up for yourself. And even if the bullying occurs at home, your school probably has rules against it.*