

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Protect Your Kids Online

There is compelling and growing [evidence](#) that social media and other tech platforms can be harmful to mental health, wellbeing and development. Children, adolescents, and teens are especially vulnerable to such harm. On March 22nd the SAFE Coalition members- The Glen Cove School District and Glen Cove Police Department- collaborated to present a Cybersafety presentation to parents as part of the Districts Digital Safety Night.

According to Deputy Chief Ortiz and Officer Peter Michaleas, more than one-third of American teens say they use a major social media platform almost constantly and that they spend too much time on social media than any other single activity besides sleeping.” Social Media apps and websites include Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, GroupMe, WhatsApp, TikTok, where teens or children can communicate with anybody all over the world. Children suffer from bullying, harassment, abuse, and even sexual exploitation by other users online as over 45% of children and teenagers have announced they have endured some sort of cyber-harassment. President Biden’s most recent State of Address maintains the Administration will build on the Surgeon-General’s Youth Mental Health Advisory, the Department of Health and Human Services’ new [Center of Excellence on Social Media and Mental Wellness](#), This Center is expected to develop and disseminate information, guidance, and training on the impact of children and youth’s social media use (risks and benefits), especially the potential risks social media platforms pose to their mental health; and the clinical and societal interventions that could be used to address these risks. Additionally, the recent passage of the Children and Media Research Advancement Act to establish a program on children and the media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children will help to holistically address this growing issue.

Cyberbullying can take place on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and [Twitter](#). By 2008, 93% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 were online. The last decade has witnessed a surge of cyberbullying, which is categorized as bullying that occurs through the use of electronic communication technologies, such as e-mail, instant messaging, social media, online gaming, or through digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone.

Cyberbullying or cyber-harassment is a form of [bullying](#) or [harassment](#) using [electronic](#) means. Cyberbullying and cyberharassment are also known as online bullying. Cyberbullying has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers, as the digital sphere has expanded and technology has advanced. Harmful bullying behavior can include posting rumors, [threats](#), [sexual remarks](#), a [victims' personal information](#), or pejorative labels (i.e. [hate speech](#)).

Far too often, the platforms do not enforce their own terms of service with respect to minors who use their products and services. Children are also subject to the platforms’ excessive data collection vacuum, which they use to deliver sensational and harmful content and troves of paid advertising. Additionally,

platforms use manipulative design techniques embedded in their products to promote addictive and compulsive use by young people in the name of “user engagement” – all to generate more revenue.

Platforms and other interactive digital service providers should be required to prioritize the privacy and wellbeing of young people above profit and revenue in their product design, including safety by design standards and practices for online platforms, products, and services. Knowing how to report, block and filter content such as adjusting your privacy settings, turning off geolocation, using a private internet connection, advising youth to talk to their friends about public posts and reporting harassment or inappropriate comment are some tips to prevent an incident.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about youth and cyber safety and seeks to educate and update the community regarding its connection to mental health and substance use. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or please visit www.safeglencove.org.