

# Officer Ken Thaxter

- West Bridgewater Police Department
- 16 years of Law Enforcement experience
- 7 years as School Liaison Officer
- Member of Satucket Regional Tactical SWAT Team- Operator/Crisis Negotiator.  
Specialized training in School Safety

- **CYBER SAFETY / CYBER BULLYING** is taught in conjunction with a comprehensive drug/alcohol curriculum
- Focus is on 6<sup>th</sup> Graders aged from 10 – 12
- Coincides with the transition from elementary to middle school



# Cyber Safety Overview

- Approximately 2 Hour classroom module
- “The Shopping Mall”
- “On Line Friends = Strangers”
- “Lie, Lie, Truth”
- “The Watering Hole”
- “The Chat Room”
- Alerting a “trusted” adult

# Cyber Bullying Overview

- Approximately 2 Hours (not including PSA's)
- Definition of Bullying
- What is Cyber Bullying
- What to do if you are being cyber bullied
- What are the consequences – legal, and administrative
- Cases

# “PSA’s”

- Partner with High School Cable TV class
- 6<sup>th</sup> Graders write, direct, and act in 60 – 90 second “public service announcements”
- Students are assigned several bullying scenarios including Cyber Bullying
- Each AD must demonstrate bullying, show the results, and outline what the students should do about it
- “The Girl in the Boy’s Room”

# Police Involvement

- Investigate any cyber crimes involving school age children.
- Work with DA's office and juvenile courts with prosecution and diversion.
- Hold educational seminars for parents on internet safety.
- Educate school personnel as well as the parents of cyber bullies and their victims on the legal aspects of cyber bullying.

# The Law – Criminal Harassment

- Most states have similar statutes
- Can be used in cases of cyber bullying via texting
- In MASS - “maliciously engaged in an act directed at a specific person...which causes alarm or annoys...or cause a reasonable person substantial emotional distress.”
- “conducted by internet communications”

# The Law – Identity Fraud

- Used in cases of Fake Web Pages
- In MASS “ Whoever ... poses (directly or indirectly) as another person ... or uses a person’s personal identifying information ...to harass another shall be guilty of identity fraud”
- “a law enforcement officer may arrest without warrant on probable cause”

# School – Police Partnership !

- Police officer as a teacher with a presence in the schools
- Memorandum of Understanding between departments regarding the sharing of information

**West Bridgewater**



**Drug Education**



WEST BRIDGEWATER MIDDLE/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

155 WEST CENTER STREET  
WEST BRIDGEWATER, MA 02379  
(508) 894-1220  
FAX (508)894-1226  
www.wbridgewater-schools.com



MR. JEFFREY SZYMANIAK  
PRINCIPAL  
jszymaniak@wbridgewater.com

MS. SUSAN FONTECCHIO  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL  
sfontecchio@wbridgewater.com

February 18, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

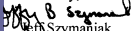
There has been a disturbing nationwide trend of students using cell phones or computers inappropriately and either intentionally or unintentionally committing a crime. Recently students from a middle school in Falmouth were being brought up on charges of disseminating child pornography by texting a picture of a girlfriend who was topless. Officer Thaxter from the West Bridgewater Police department and I are working together to inform parents of existing laws and new laws that affect middle and high school students. **A felony charge of disseminating child pornography can be brought against anyone who uses a computer or cell phone to pass along pictures of someone under the age of 18 who is nude.** These charges can be brought even if the child takes his or her own picture and then passes it along. Each student who receives the picture and passes it along is subject to charges. Students who are charged with this type of a felony could then be excluded from school pending the outcome of a trial.

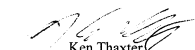
Two years ago, a spokesperson from the Attorney General's office spoke to all students and some parents at the middle/senior high school about this subject. During DARE, Officer Thaxter speaks to all sixth graders while they are at Howard school about a variety of topics, this one included. In the weeks following vacation, Officer Thaxter and I will be holding seminars with all students during power block to address this issue and answer questions that students might have.

We have some recommendations for parents that might be helpful. Parents should periodically check their child's cell phone and computer for material that is inappropriate. If your son or daughter has a "myspace" or "facebook" page that they allow you to check, there is a strong possibility they might have another account under another name. We know that kids use their cell phones at night when they are supposed to be sleeping. Parents might want to limit their child's access to a cell phone after a certain hour. Keeping computers in an open area, not in a bedroom, and designating times for use is also a suggestion.

Our goal is to educate and keep safe the students of West Bridgewater Middle/Senior High School. We will continue to communicate with parents to assist in the prevention of situations where students are most at risk. Ken and I held a forum this year regarding bullying in the middle school and we both serve on the drug and alcohol task force. Parent involvement is crucial in assisting us to achieve our goal. We were both disappointed at the parent attendance for our seminar at our last task force meeting. A meeting has been tentatively scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 in the library. At this meeting Ken and I will discuss changing the mission of the drug and alcohol task force and broadening its scope to address all the issues adolescents are encountering. We hope to see you on April 1<sup>st</sup> for the first meeting of the "Community of Concern".

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey Szymaniak  
Principal

  
Ken Thaxter  
WBPD

The Mission of West Bridgewater Middle-Senior High School is to provide a safe, supportive learning environment in which each student will acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become a life-long learner and responsible citizen in our diverse and changing society.

The West Bridgewater Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

- All parents of Middle and High School students received a letter from myself and the Principal informing them of upcoming assemblies addressing cyber-bullying and "sexting"
- Joint teaching partnership with police and educators

# Contact Information

- kthaxter @ wbpd.com