

## **GRACE'S LAW**

Grace's Law 2.0 was signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan on Thursday, April 18, 2019, and went into effect on **Tuesday, October 1, 2019**. By enacting Grace's Law 2.0, Maryland is the first state in the nation to have legislation that increases penalties for cyberbullying.

As National Bullying Prevention Month begins, take the opportunity to remind students about the ramifications of cyberbullying.

Grace's Law 2.0 enforces and ensures that cyberbullying is prohibited on all social media platforms.

When any person, no matter their age, acts with malicious intent to cause emotional or physical harm to a child, the law provides substantial penalties to the perpetrator and allows victims and their parents to seek court orders to stop cyberbullying after a single incident.

Victims of cyberbullying no longer must wait for several incidents of online abuse to report the incident to police - victims and their parent/guardian can now act immediately.

The expanded law increases penalties for cyber assaults on victims 18 and younger, to up to three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

With the enactment of Grace's Law 2.0, any online incident done with malicious intent, as well as any behavior that intentionally attempts to intimidate or harass a minor, including bullying, suicide baiting and sextortion, would fall under the heading of cyberbullying.

It is also important to note that perpetrators do not have to communicate directly with the victim. For example, actions such as subscribing a child to a pornographic Website, using electronic communications to try and entice the stalking of a minor, and maliciously tormenting a child by disseminating sexual information about them would subject the perpetrator(s) to up to three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Questions regarding this information should be directed to the following individual(s): April Lewis, Executive Director 443-809-4360