From acclaimed author Rachel Vail comes a thought-provoking, modern-day tale for young teens that explores friendships and loyalty in a world where social media dictates social standing.

Unfriended

In middle school, nothing is more important than friendship.
When Truly is invited to sit at the Popular Table with the group she has dreamed of joining, she can hardly believe her luck. Everyone seems so nice, so kind to one another. But all is not as it seems with her new friends, and soon she's caught in a maelstrom of lies, misunderstandings, accusations and counter-accusations, all happening very publicly in the relentless, hyper-connected social media world.

Six eighth-graders, four girls and two boys, struggle to understand and process their fractured glimpses into one another's lives as they find new ways to disconnect, but also to connect, in Rachel Vail's richest and most searching book.

Advanced Praise for *Unfriended*

"A solid choice that will ignite meaningful discussion." *—School Library Journal*

"Vail has a great ear for dialogue, and her characters. . . are well differentiated and realistic." *—VOYA* **(starred)**

"With keen insight, Vail reveals the internal struggles with uncertainty and self-doubt that can plague young teens regardless of popularity status. . . With a resolution that is both realistic and hopeful, Vail captures the complexity of middle school social challenges, insightfully addressing the issues of friendships and integrity." *—Publishers Weekly*

"Vail effectively conveys the sometimes unthinking cruelty of middle-school society with a clear and objective eye." *—Booklist*

Cyber Bullying: A Guide for Teachers

What is Cyber Bullying?
- Bullying through email, instant messaging, chat room exchanges, website posts, or digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant (Kowaiski, et al, 2008). Cyber bullying, like traditional bullying, involves an imbalance of power, aggression and negative action that is often repeated.

Five Key Factors that Separate Cyber Bullying from Traditional Bullying:

- Anonymity
- Disinhibition
- Accessibility
- Punitive Fears
- Ambiguous Bystander Roles

What are the Warning Signs of Cyber Bullying?

The warning signs of cyber bullying are similar to those of traditional bullying in terms of the emotional effects. It may be harder to determine if a child is being cyber bullied because there will be no physical evidence of abuse. If a child exhibits the following signs, he or she may be the victim of cyber bullying:

- Appears sad, moody or anxious
- Avoiding school
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Declining academic performance
- Appears upset after using the computer at school
- Appears upset after viewing a text at school

What can Teachers do to Prevent it?

- Specify clear rules regarding the use of the Internet, computers and electronic devices. Post signs around the classroom to remind students to use technology responsibly.
- Teach students to never share personal information online including full name, address, telephone number, school name, parents' names and Social Security number. Students should only share their password with their parents.
- Encourage students to share with you what they are doing online
- Model appropriate online behavior. Show them what appropriate emails look and sound like.
- Hold class discussions about safe surfing (i.e. evaluate websites for usefulness and validity, and only open emails from trusted sources)
- Create a peer mentoring program where older students informally teach lessons and share experiences with younger students

Promoting Safe Online Conversations: What Parents/Guardians Need to Know

- Computers should be in a public space in the house for easy monitoring
- Limit amount of computer use to one hour a day
- Discuss the "golden rule" as it applies to cyberspace. Ask your child, "do you want someone to say that about you?" before they say it about someone else
- Discuss the ease with which rumors are spread online. Tell them to be **rumor blockers**, not rumor starters.
- Encourage students to not send a message when they are feeling upset or angry. Let them know it is ok to wait to respond until they are feeling calm.
- Online friends should also be friends in the real world. Make sure the friends your child keeps online are ones he/she knows.

References

Centers for Disease Control, 2010
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 3-5 and Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Program for Grades 6-12. Hazelden