

Useful Tips for Parents

- **Talk with your children** from a young age about their use of technology, be interested and involved so these conversations form a natural part of family discussions into the future.
- **Keep computers in areas of your house where everyone has access to ensure you can easily see the screen.** Remember laptops, mobile phones, games and other forms of technology can be connected anywhere in your home if you have wireless access, even bedrooms and bathrooms!
- **Visit cyber space yourself.** Stay as current as you can, ask your children where they are having fun in cyber space and try it yourself.
- **Make an online agreement with your child.** Agree on what is and is not acceptable use of technology; discuss with your child the consequences of breaking the agreement. Model appropriate use of technology.
- **Keep technology out of bedrooms after bedtime.** Sleep is essential for growing bodies. Help your child to establish a good sleep routine uninterrupted by messages and calls.
- **Trust is important; however, similar to needing to keep them safe offline, you need to know where they are online.**
- **Look for changes in behaviour that may indicate problems.** Subtle changes in your child's behaviour may be indicators of problems. Ask your child about these changes.
- **Ask questions.** Get to know your children's online friends, and encourage your children to only have online friends who they also know offline.
- **Encourage your children to never share their passwords with anyone...other than you, their parents, if that is a part of your online agreement.**
- **Search for your child's name online.** What is written in cyber space about your child? Put his/her name in 'inverted commas' for a more thorough 'search. Perhaps start with a search engine like Google or Yahoo.

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What if your child is being cyber bullied or engaging in cyber bullying behaviours?

- **Listen non-judgmentally** to what your child is saying, stay calm and try not to overreact.
- **Ask lots of questions.** Together with your child, assess the level of harm to your child and/or others.

If the harm is high to extreme reach out for help.

Work with organisations such as your child's school, counselling services (either at school or outside of school) and Kids Helpline (see list below). Work with your child to come up with a plan of action both s/he and you are comfortable with.

Places to get help:

- Life Line - 13 11 14 (cost of a local call; 24 hours)
- Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800 (free call from a land line; 24 hours)
- Beyondblue info line: 1300 22 4636 / www.beyondblue.org.au
- Headspace: www.headspace.org.au - offers a comprehensive website and one-stop-shop services that are youth-specific
- Orygen Youth Health: www.oyh.org.au - ensuring that young people can access high-quality mental health, and drug and alcohol services.
- Reach Out!: www.reachout.com.au - web-based service which aims to inspire young people to help themselves through tough times.
- The Inspire Foundation: www.inspire.org.au - online programs that prevent youth suicide and improve young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- SANE Australia: 1800 18 SANE (7263) / www.sane.org
- Somazone: www.somazone.com.au - focuses on mental health, drug- use, relationships and body image.
- MoodGYM: www.moodgym.anu.edu.au - learn about Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Free resource that requires registration.
- BluePages: www.bluepages.anu.edu.au - information about depression and its treatments.
- Your local doctor (GP)
- Counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists – for information on practitioners in your local area, call the beyondblueinfo line, on 1300 22 4636.

If the harm is very low to moderate the following tips may be of use.

- **Respect your child's decisions.** Young people feel they need to work through these problems themselves. Listen to your child's suggested approach to address the problem and offer suggestions but be careful not to take over (unless this is what s/he wants). It is okay to make it clear to your child that you are not comfortable agreeing to do nothing, but that you will work with them to find a plan of action you are both happy with.
- **Consider alternatives to removing their access to technology.** By doing this you will be socially isolating your child. If you take away the technology your children will probably stop telling you if there is a problem in the future.

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Young people have told us the following strategies are useful. You might like to discuss these with your child/ren.

- ✓ **Save the evidence.** The temptation to keep re-reading hurtful messages is very high. Perhaps suggest your child sends the message onto you for saving, or prints the message then deletes it or you could take a photograph of it and then delete it. This is important however, as if the situation gets worse the school and even the police may need to see the evidence.
- ✓ **Block the person who is cyber bullying you.** Most young people will know how this is done as the process varies depending upon how and where (in cyber space) your child is being bullied. If it is via their mobile phone there is currently no mechanism to block another phone number, depending upon the severity you may wish to contact your service provider or the Police, you will need to keep the evidence for them to take action. The bullying will need to fulfil one of the following criteria for action to be taken; three or more unwelcome calls over a 48 to 120 hour period OR unwelcome calls made at consistent and/or regular intervals (e.g., 2am every Wednesday) OR ten or more unwelcome calls over a 24 hour period.
- ✓ **Set your social networking site to private.** Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site for young people. When you go to the homepage on the bottom right is the word 'privacy'. This will bring you to the page on the right. Go through the privacy settings with your child to ensure they have their site set correctly.
- ✓ **Try to find out who is cyber bullying you and why.** Behaviour is usually driven by a motivating force, it may be that your child has upset the person who is bullying them in the past and there is a need for some mediation to sort the situation out. This may or may not be part of the action plan you agree upon with your child and may or may not involve the school depending upon who the parties involved. The most important skill in mediation is being able to discuss the incident non-judgmentally and with an open mind.
- ✓ **Tell a friend about the cyber bullying.** It is important for young people to have support from their peers as well as adults. Ask your child if they have told any of their friends. Discuss this as an option.



Please note: The PowerPoint presentation will be available on the Department of Education's website from Monday 26 May 2014 www.education.tas.gov.au. Search for Donna Cross. It will be also be available on the department's Facebook.

If you don't have access to the internet, please contact your local school.