

Internet Safety Tips for Students

Young people today have access to a wide variety of websites, applications and online games via the internet and as a result are accessible to many millions of people worldwide which often results in personal information being available. There are identified dangers to all young people using the internet because of this, such as, young people being exposed to inappropriate content, cyber-bullying and harassment, exchange of inappropriate images and identity theft. Young people are often not aware that their words and or photos, which may have been intended for a small audience, sometimes find their way to a larger one, often with both unexpected and undesirable consequences.

Here are some tips from the website www.cybersafetysolutions.com.au to help parents/caregivers in navigating the cyber world and keeping young people safe:

- Computers should be in a common area in the house where parents/caregivers can monitor what is going on
- Install and regularly update filters and other monitoring/blocking software to minimise dangers
- Know the sites young people are accessing to ensure suitability. Filters can sometimes fail to protect and can be bypassed by someone who is 'tech savvy'
- Learn the lingo so that you can decipher some of the content if required
- ABSOLUTELY NO EXCHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION
- Social Networking Profiles should be set to PRIVATE
- MSN contacts and social networking site friends should be people that young people know in real life. This is one way to reduce possible risks as ANYONE can be ANYONE online
- Very close supervision for younger people is highly recommended. There should be a limit to email correspondence/MSN in relation to a list of friends and family that has been approved
- Do not let young people 'google' aimlessly with no supervision. Young people need to be taught about search engines and how they work
- Make sure there is no response to rude or harassing emails. (keep a record in case of further investigation)
- Advise your son/daughter to immediately exit any site that makes them feel uncomfortable or worried or anxious. Basic protective behaviours apply
- If harassment continues, the current email account can be deleted and a new one started. Make sure that the email address is only given to a selected few
- If receiving harassing messages on MSN – have the sender blocked
- If you have found inappropriate content about your son/daughter or someone in your care on a website or are informed about this situation you can inform SAPOL
- Have a family internet contract and set house rules about what information young people in your house can put onto websites or share with others
- Many young people will not tell a parent/caregiver/teacher if bullied or harassed online for fear that they will lose internet access. Reinforce with them that it is OK to tell someone about a problem and that they won't get into trouble
- REMEMBER that the internet and the various applications are a lot of fun and a great tool..... support your son/daughter to maximise the benefits and surf safely!