Cybersafety at home

Technology such as mobile phones, personal computers, tablets and gaming devices has become part of life in almost every Australian household. Along with providing many advantages, new technology also raises significant challenges and concerns, such as cyberbullying, the need to protect privacy, too much time spent using technology, and children accessing offensive, inappropriate or illegal content. Parents can manage these challenges and support their children's cybersafety by providing boundaries, guidance, support, encouragement and care.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is using technology to intimidate, harass or bully an individual or group, for example by sending abusive texts or emails, excluding them or posting hurtful messages, pictures or videos. Young people experiencing cyberbullying may not tell their parents due to fear that they will overreact or remove their technology access.

- Talk with your child about relating respectfully and responsibly online.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about any concerns they have, including any upsetting online experiences. Reassure them that you will not remove their access to technology if they report concerns to you.
- If your child is the target of cyberbullying, support them to take actions to address it, such as blocking abusive contacts, reporting the incidents to service providers, the school or police, and talking to the parents of young people involved.

Protecting privacy

Many online activities – including social networking and instant messaging – involve sharing personal information. But disclosing personal information – such as full names, addresses, phone numbers, family members' names, school, bank details, usernames and passwords – can threaten a young person's safety and wellbeing. In addition, young people can easily and quickly create and share content, including photographs or videos of themselves or others that are inappropriately personal and which may affect their social and emotional wellbeing or reputation.

- Talk about protecting privacy with your child.
- Activate privacy settings: for example, on mobile phones, social networking accounts, and email accounts.
- Establish an agreement about what your child shares online and what they keep private.

Too much time using technology

For many young people – and adults – using technology is part of day-to-day life. While technology use offers many positive opportunities, too much use can negatively affect a child's health, schoolwork and relationships. Excessive time online may be related to engagement in a particular type of technology use, such as social networking, gaming or pornography. A child with high levels of use may or may not consider their use excessive.

- Talk with your child about their use and any concerns you have about its impact.
- Set limits on time spent using technology.
- Keep technology out of children's bedrooms.
- Support your child to develop a healthy balance of online and offline activities, including physical activities and engaging with family and friends in-person.
- If you have ongoing difficulties with excessive use that is negatively affecting your child's wellbeing, seek professional support.

Accessing offensive, inappropriate or illegal content

Technology provides access to a vast amount of material from all around the world. Unfortunately, some of that material is offensive, illegal or otherwise inappropriate for young people. For example: images of violence, material that promotes hate towards individuals or groups, pornography – including extreme and violent sexual imagery, images of child sexual abuse, gambling, instructions for crime or violence, and material that promotes harm such as eating disorders or self-harm. Young people may seek out this kind of material or come across it accidentally.

- Talk with your child about the risk of accessing offensive, inappropriate or illegal material and why it is unhealthy for them to access it.
- Set limits on your child's technology use. For example, have them use it only in shared spaces in the home.
- Encourage your child to talk to you if they come across something that concerns or upsets them.
- Use parental controls to manage technology in your household.

For more information about how you can support your child to be a safe and responsible cyber-citizen, see **http://cybersmart.gov.au/Parents.aspx**