



# The internet and the law

## Laws relating to the internet exist to:

- \* protect people from cybercrimes such as fraud and identity theft
- \* enforce people's rights
- \* solve conflicts
- \* prevent or deter people from behaving in ways that negatively impact others including:
  - posting intimate photos without consent
  - cyberbullying
  - making threats
  - verbal abuse
  - spreading false rumours.

## National and state laws related to using a phone or computer include:

- \* creating, sending or distributing intimate images
- \* making threats
- \* harassing someone and/or
- \* damaging someone's reputation by publishing false information.

Legal consequences may result in:

- an official police caution, a fine, being placed on a good behaviour bond or imprisonment
- being charged with possessing and distributing child pornography
- being listed on the child sex offender's register
- being charged with using a phone or internet service in a menacing, harassing or offensive way
- paying damages (compensation) for defaming a person.

An offender may be:

- \* limited to what occupation they can choose (due to a police record)
- \* refused entry to some countries (due to a police record)
- \* closely monitored by police to ensure they abide by restrictions or orders placed on them.

Cyber defamation is where a person intentionally posts statements or images online to hurt another person's reputation. Even if someone is not the original author they may have civil action taken against them, if the material is proven to be false and may harm the person's reputation.

## If you find yourself in a situation where you've made a poor decision or choice online - don't panic

- \* Remove any material that you have posted.
- \* Contact the website administrator, report what has happened and request for the information to be taken down
- \* Apologise to the person and see how you may be able to repair the damage.
- \* Ask for help from someone you trust.
- \* Seek advice: Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800.

## Complementary resources

- \* eSafety website information and advice on [sexting](#).
- \* [Lesson plan](#) for lower secondary on [sexting](#).
- \* Information on [legislation](#) related to the internet.
- \* View the [legal video](#) on our eSafety [Vimeo channel](#).