Principles for responding
to online incidents

Toolkit for Universities
Creating safer online environments

This resource provides high-level principles to help frame university policies and procedures for responding to online incidents. It also offers guidance on appropriate actions and clarifies responsibilities.

Universities are committed to promoting student and staff safety and wellbeing, including when they engage online. To fully support students, it is important to have comprehensive policies and procedures in place, that enable universities to respond to any online safety incident appropriately and with speed.

The following principles can help universities with online safety planning and responses.

Principles:

1. Online safety is part of the mission and values of a university and is incorporated in the institution's policy framework.

2. University communities are made aware of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour on all university-affiliated platforms and social media.

3. All members of the university community are familiar with their legal and ethical responsibilities for online safety.

4. Online safety incidents are considered factors which can affect a student's ability to learn, and a teacher's ability to teach.

5. Universities raise awareness of eSafety, its resources and reporting services to their communities.

6. Universities provide support to anyone targeted by cyber abuse, including content removal, access to support services and setting in place policies and codes of conduct.

7. The safety and wellbeing of anyone targeted by cyber abuse is at the centre of a University's response – considering their rights, views and wishes.

8. Universities will investigate online incidents involving staff or students, seeking advice from the appropriate contacts within the university community as needed (for example, faculty leadership, Safer Community or IT teams).

9. Where appropriate, universities will work in partnership with external services to offer the necessary supports to anyone targeted by cyber abuse.

eSafety education

esafety.gov.au