Online safety for parents and carers

The internet is an essential part of your child's world — for education, socialising and entertainment.

As parents and carers, you can help your children explore their digital world and educate them about how to avoid harmful experiences online and deal with them if they arise.

Talk to your children early, and often, about what they are doing online. For tips and advice about how to help your children to stay safe online, go to the eSafety website at **esafety.gov.au/parents**

Cyberbullying

Online bullying can take many forms such as sending insulting messages, hurtful images or videos, nasty gossip, or excluding or humiliating others online. Your child may be worried that if they talk to you, the bullying will get worse, or that you might remove their access to the internet or their mobile phone.

Some signs that might indicate that your child is being bullied include:

- becoming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone, or becoming secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or angry, appearing to be lonely or distressed
- wanting to avoid school or a decline in their schoolwork.

To find out more about how to talk to your children about respectful online behaviour from an early age, and make sure they know they can come to you about any concerns, go to the eSafety website at **esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/ cyberbullying**

Unwanted contact

Do you know who your child is talking to online? We all want to protect our young people from contact with strangers, especially anyone who could harm your child.

Keep up to date with the sites and apps your child is using and encourage them to talk to you if someone online is asking them to do something that doesn't feel right. Help your child to be alert to the signs of unusual online contact, such as being asked:

- a lot of questions about personal information soon after first contact
- for favours, with reward of gifts and promises in return
- to make contact in other ways, such as online chat and texting
- who shares their computer and what room it is in
- for intimate information
- to keep their relationship secret
- to meet them in person.

To find out how to block unwanted contact and for a more comprehensive guide to managing unwanted contact go to the eSafety website at **esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/unwanted-contact**

Sexting and sending nudes

It is important to talk to your children as they get older about the possible consequences of sending or sharing intimate or explicit photos or videos, also known as Nudes or Noods.

While sexting may not be as common as you and your children think, it is important to be aware of the risks of sharing intimate images. Even with trusted friends, things may go wrong.

Unwanted sharing of very personal images may result in humiliation, bullying and damage to a young person's reputation. Once an image is shared, the child loses control of the image, and it may be published anywhere on the internet.

NOTE: Creating or sharing sexualised images of children and young people under the age of 18 years is illegal and may result in criminal charges and penalties.

To learn more about how to talk to your child about sexting and sending nudes, and for tips on what to do if your child has sent or received a nude image, go to the eSafety website at **esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/sending-nudes-sexting**

Tools, tips and advice

You can play an important role in helping your child stay safe online. Being open, engaged and supportive is important in helping them develop good online habits and digital intelligence.

Get to know the digital devices your child is using, and together, agree the rules for online access. These rules can be reviewed as the child grows.

Most of all, keep the channels of communication open, listen to them and don't judge.

Go to eSafety.gov.au/languages for more information.

Help your child stay safe online.

Start the Chat.