ONLINE SAFETY

IN TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first

Did you know?

The online world is a fundamental part of our modern lives, providing access to everyday services, social media networks, entertainment and education.

Responsible use of digital technology is everyone's business – this includes users, providers, parents, schools and communities. Most online safety (eSafety) issues occur when students are online outside of school, school activities and school IT systems.

It is important that students know how to use online technology safely, and are supported in behaving respectfully and responsibly to keep themselves and others safe.

You, your child's school and the online community have the responsibility to model and promote a positive and safe online environment.

What are eSafety issues?

- Cyber abuse – abusive online behaviour which is reasonably likely to have a seriously threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating effect on a person.
- Cyberbullying – use of online technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or physically.
- Image-based abuse – distribution of intimate, nude or sexual images.
- Offensive or illegal content – violent, explicit or criminal content may be considered prohibited content under the law.

- Sexting – sending of provocative or sexual photos, messages or videos.
- Social engineering – manipulating people into performing actions or divulging confidential information.
- Social networking – there are some risks to 'meeting' people online – especially if you do not know them in real life.
- Unwanted contact – any type of online communication that is unwelcome, including grooming and predatory behaviour.

Other eSafety issues including balancing online time, managing a digital reputation, online gaming and protecting personal information.

For your child

- Your child's school provides a safe, supportive and respectful school community to learn in, including participating safely in online technology-based learning and how to be a responsible user of technology.
- Schools work within the National Safe Schools Framework that provides all schools, teachers, parents and students with resources to develop student safety and wellbeing policies, including cyber-safety.
- Schools have guidelines around the acceptable use of technology at school that students must agree to. The Department filters internet use to protect students from known risks.
- Your child will be expected to use online technology responsibly at school and encouraged to do this outside of school as well.

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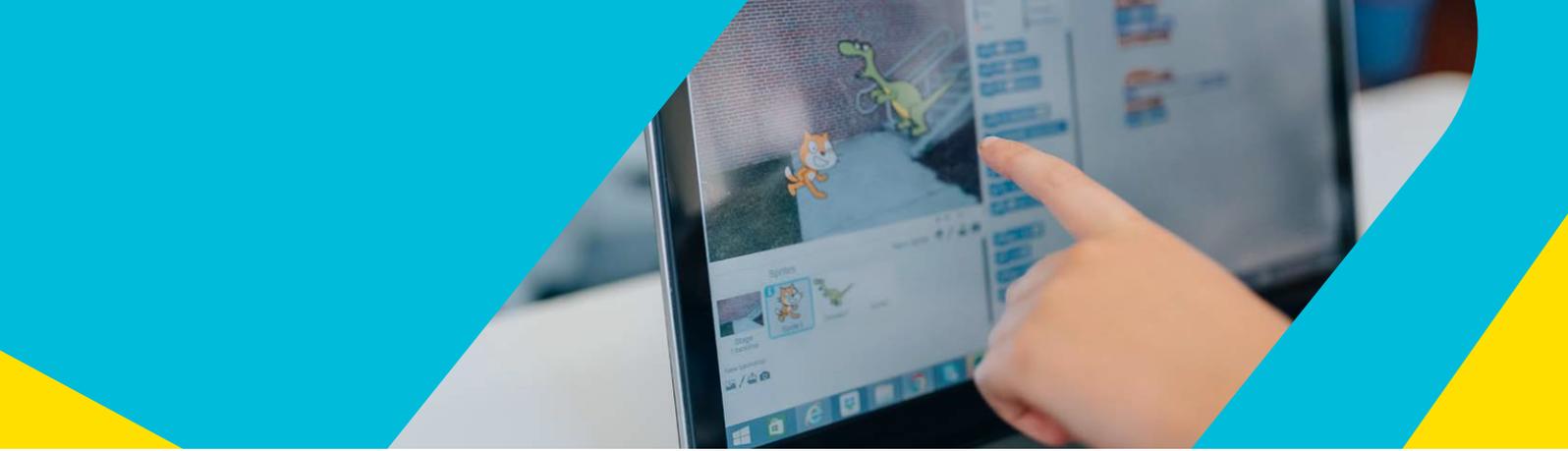
For you

- Get involved with online content that you and your child can enjoy and share – in-person and online.
- Talk regularly to your child about what they are doing and seeing online, and negotiate key rules about their online use together.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about any problems, issues or concerns they have, including if they have taken risks or made mistakes.
- Model safe and positive online behaviour and help your child understand how you manage online risks. This could include involving them in conversations about the types of photos and information you share online and what you wouldn't share.
- Use parental controls, filtering software and safe searches to help block dangerous or inappropriate content.
- iParent has been developed by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to help parents learn about the digital environment and how to help your child have safe and enjoyable online experiences.

Getting help

- eSafety issues can having a significant impact on emotional health and wellbeing, and your child's school can help you to support your child and provide positive online experiences.
- Your child may want to see a school social worker or school psychologist to discuss support and ways to feel safer.
- Kids Helpline, offers free and confidential online and telephone counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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- There are steps you and your child can take to have serious cyberbullying material removed from social media sites, including making a report directly to the social media service, and collecting evidence using screen shots before making a report to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.
- Make your child's school aware of unacceptable behaviour between their students (at school, a school activity, or outside of school) that is having a negative impact on learning or wellbeing at school.
- Schools will use restorative practices and principles to develop an understanding of why the behaviour occurred and take steps to prevent such behaviour from occurring in future, including working to build and repair relationships between the students.
- In serious cases of unacceptable behaviour, schools may refer the matter to a relevant authority (such as the police) for investigation.
- Under the *Education Act 2016*, schools are not able to apply detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion or prohibition when unacceptable behaviour between students occurs outside of school or school activities.

Where can I get more information?

- Talk to your child's teacher or principal early if you have concerns about your child's online behaviour or the online behaviour of other students at the school so the school can help prevent the situation from escalating.
- Visit our Cyber Safety webpage for links to resources, including the:
  » Office of the eSafety Commissioner at www.esafety.gov.au
  » National Student Wellbeing Hub at: www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au
  » National Cyber Security website: www.staysmartonline.gov.au for simple steps to protect personal and financial information online.