



PARENT INFORMATION | PRIMARY PARENTS  
**CYBER SAFETY**

### ONLINE RISKS

We know that young people are growing up in a society with increasing access to technology. There are many positives associated with technology but it is extremely important that parents are aware of the potential online risks that children may be susceptible to on the Internet and access information to help their children safely navigate cyber space. Examples of risks include:

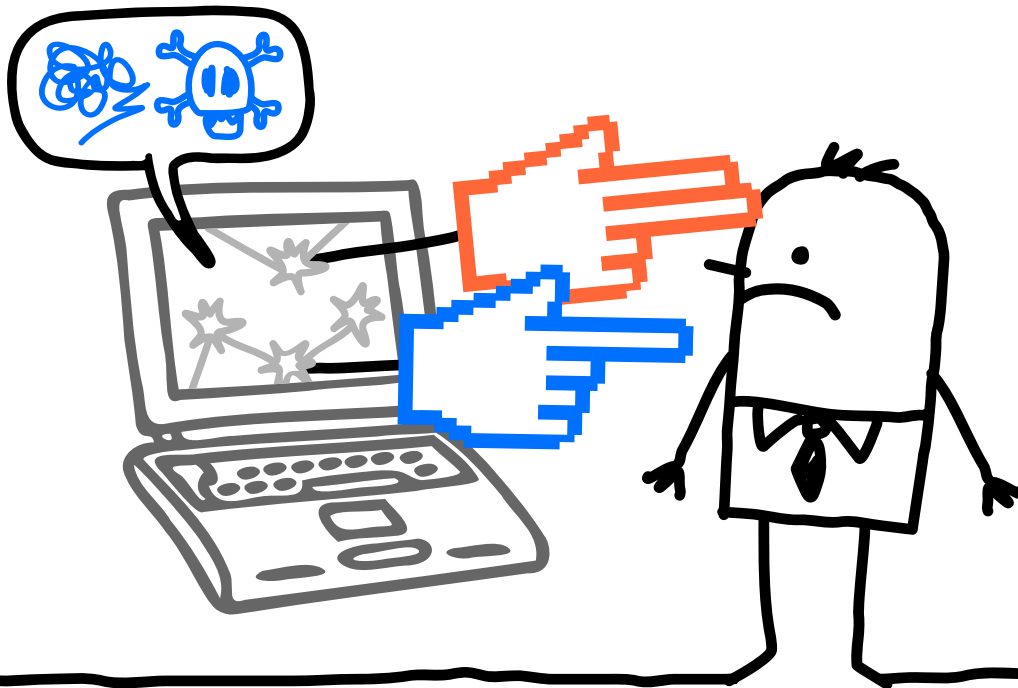
- sites which are sexual in nature,
- violent or hateful material,
- those that advocate the use of weapons or harmful substances such as alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
- communication with unknown individuals in chat rooms, game sites and social networking sites.

The website:

<http://kids.getnetwise.org/safetyguide/danger/material>

outlines ideas to help parents prevent their children being exposed to inappropriate material. If you have any concerns related to your son's online safety please contact the TESS department on p. 9581 6035.

Infants, Primary and early Middle School children exposed to pornographic material such as videos and photographs online will likely result in a level of knowledge earlier than what is developmentally appropriate. Curiosity and experimentation by these children, (possibly with friends) may have far reaching consequences.



## CYBER BULLYING

“Cyber bullying is wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text” (Patchin & Hinduja 2008), including email, chat rooms, discussion groups, online social networking, instant messaging, web pages or mobile SMS.

Some examples of cyber bullying include:

- Sending of abusive texts or emails.
- Posting unkind messages or inappropriate images on social networking sites.
- Excluding individuals from online chats or other communication.
- Taking and sharing unflattering or private images.
- Assuming the identity of the victim online and representing them in a negative manner or manner that may damage their relationship with others.
- Repeatedly, and for no strategic reason, attacking players in online gaming.

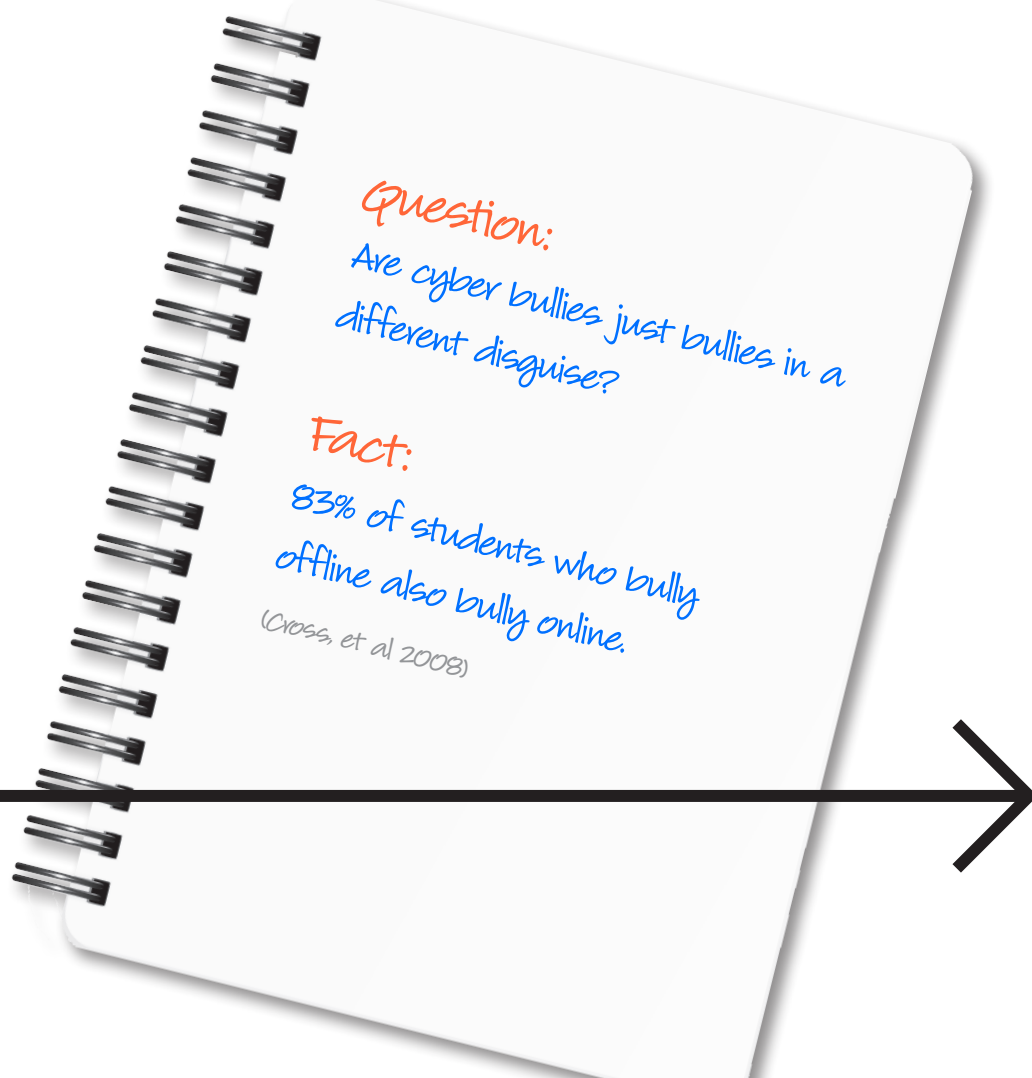
It is important to note that although similar, there are distinct differences between bullying and cyber bullying. Cyber bullying differs in the following ways:

- It may involve rapid dissemination of harmful material to large audiences.
- It can be difficult for an individual to escape as it can occur 24/7 - a student may not even feel safe in their own home.
- It can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and due to the distance between the bully and victim, there may be a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

One or more of the following signs and changes in behaviour could indicate that a student is being cyber bullied:

- Avoidance and dislike of school.
- Decline in academic performance.
- Decline in social interaction.
- Complaints of feeling unwell even though there is no specific illness.
- Increased social exclusion and peer rejection.
- Poorer physical health and sleepiness.
- Increased negative self-perception.
- Increased reluctance to participate in regular school activities.
- Becoming withdrawn, appearing depressed or anxious, having mood swings, crying for no apparent reason.

\*\*The above signs should be considered in light of the student’s usual behaviour.



**Question:**

Are cyber bullies just bullies in a different disguise?

**Fact:**

83% of students who bully offline also bully online.

(Cross, et al 2008)

FOR THE SCHOOL AND THE FAMILY TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO SAFEGUARD OUR CHILDREN, IT IS THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATION THAT PARENTS WILL:

**One**

Communicate regularly about their child's cyber world.

- Talk over dinner.
- Ask your child to orientate around the sites they are looking at.
- Ask specific questions like: "How many friends do you have? Do you know all of these people? What constitutes a friend?"

**Two**

Have ongoing discussions about internet rules and appropriate online behaviour and to monitor these!

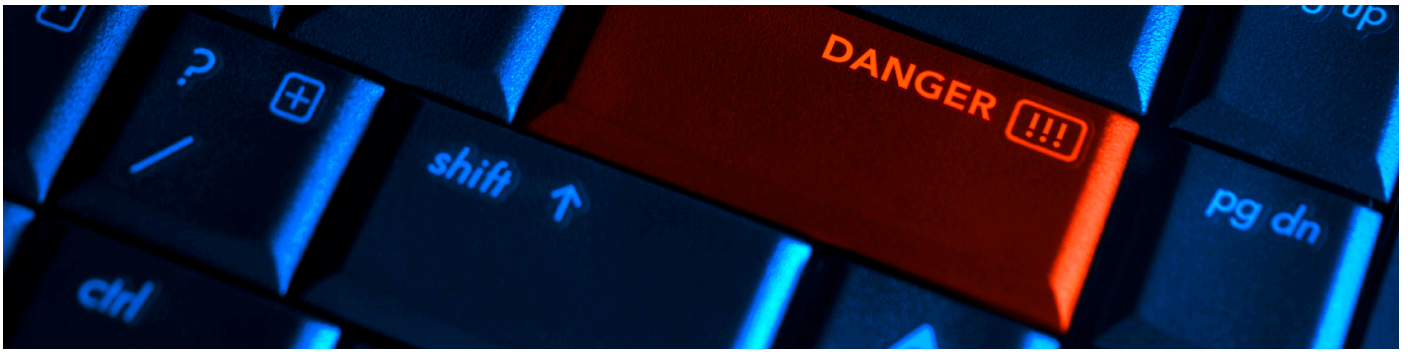
- Some rules might include:
- Put the family computer in communal areas.
- Discuss how much time is to be spent on social networking sites.
- Discuss "think before you post".
- Request to be a friend on Facebook (Children must be 13 to access this site).

\*For other tips have a look at the websites listed.

**Three**

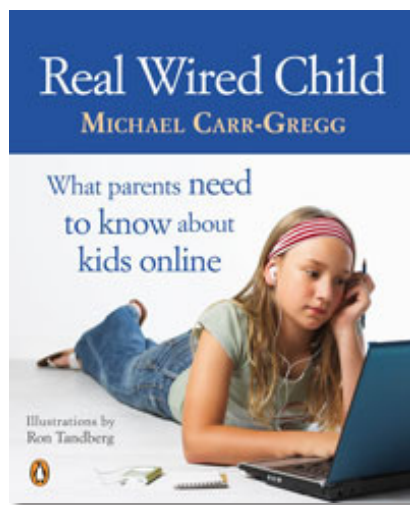
Ensure that privacy is maintained as much as possible

- Always use and check privacy settings. To learn how to block communications on popular websites and applications including MSN Messenger, Facebook, My Space, Bebo, Twitter have a look at <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/stop.asp>
- Protect your personal information – keep all login and password information secret and change them regularly.
- Encourage your children to only admit known friends to social networking pages – use "Stranger Danger Principles".



## USEFUL RESOURCES

### BOOKS



### WEBSITES

- [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)
- [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)
- [www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au)
- <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au>
- [www.cybersafetysolutions.com.au](http://www.cybersafetysolutions.com.au)
- [curethebullies.com.au](http://curethebullies.com.au)
- <http://www.getnetwise.org/>
- <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site/stop.asp>