

Where you can get help

Your school

Resolving issues of bullying is in everyone's best interest. Contact the school which your child attends. Although the school has less power in relation to bullying that occurs outside its premises, it may be able to provide advice and support.

Helplines for parents and caregivers

If you need additional advice, for DECS schools contact the DECS Parent Helpline: 1800 222 696; for Catholic and independent schools, phone the school.

For confidential support phone the NetAlert Helpline on 1800 880 176 or the SA Child and Youth Health Parent Helpline on 1300 364 100.

Helplines for children and young people

Confidential counselling for young people is available from the SA Youth Healthline on 1300 131 719 and also the Kids Help Line on 1800 551 800.

NetAlert website

NetAlert at www.netalert.net.au provides excellent downloadable information for parents and caregivers.

Want to express your concern?

About an e-crime

If you think the cyber bullying you know about may constitute a crime (see overleaf) you can contact your local police station or Bank SA Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. Advice is also available from the NetAlert Helpline on 1800 880 176.

About your child accessing offensive sites

If you are concerned about your child accessing offensive sites on the internet you can complain to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) at www.acma.gov.au. They will investigate the matter for you, but will not investigate complaints about something that a person disagrees with or simply does not like.

Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children

Advice for parents and caregivers

All parents and caregivers want their children to be able to use the internet and mobile phones safely.

This pamphlet provides information for concerned parents and caregivers, including advice about what to do if your child is feeling unsafe following online or mobile phone communications, or exposure to offensive internet sites.

Produced in collaboration with the
Coalition to Decrease Bullying Harassment
and Violence in South Australian Schools

Further information about
the Coalition can be found at
www.decs.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/bullying

The membership of the Coalition includes
representatives from the three schooling sectors
and the University of South Australia,
Flinders University and the University of Adelaide.

Websites worth visiting

- **Kids Help Line** www.kidshelp.com.au
- **Child and Youth Health** www.cyh.com.au
- **DECS advice to parents and caregivers** www.decs.sa.gov.au go to Parents and Community > Health and Wellbeing > Bullying and Harassment
- **Bullying. No Way!** www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- **NetAlert** www.netalert.net.au
- **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** www.acma.gov.au
- **Think U Know** www.thinkuknow.com.au



Government
of South Australia
Department of Education
and Children's Services



Catholic Education
SOUTH AUSTRALIA



ASSOCIATION of
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS of SA

What is cyber bullying?

E-technology provides individuals with a powerful means of communicating instantly with others in both positive and negative ways.

Cyber bullying is bullying which uses e-technology as a means of victimising others. It is the use of an internet service or mobile technologies—such as email, chat room discussion groups, instant messaging, webpages or SMS (text messaging)—with the intention of harming another person.

Examples can include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down or humiliate the recipient.

Activities can include flaming (repeated negative messages), sexual and racist harassment, denigration, impersonation, trickery, exclusion and cyber stalking.

The targeted person often feels powerless and may need help.

What is electronic crime (e-crime)?

Cyber bullying may involve varying levels of severity, ranging from occasional messages to frequently repeated and highly disturbing threats to a person's life.

Cyber bullying can therefore be an e-crime, a fact often not clearly understood by those involved. E-crime occurs when a computer or other electronic communication devices (eg mobile phones) are used to commit an offence, are targeted in an offence, or act as a storage device in an offence.

A minority of children are involved in e-crime.

Examples from the South Australian Police (SAPol)

I got into their email account and sent abusive emails to everyone in the address book.

Offence: Unlawful operation of computer system.

Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for 6 months or \$2,500.

I took a photo of X in the showers after sport and sent it to everyone. What a laugh!

Offence: Production or dissemination of child pornography.

Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for 10 years.

He told me if I didn't do what he said he would put that photo up on the internet and then tell all my friends. I was so embarrassed.

Offence: Blackmail.

Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for 15 years.

I created a website about X and we all put stuff on there about how much they and everyone else like them are hated.

Offence: Racial vilification.

Maximum penalty: \$5,000, or imprisonment for 3 years, or both.

Other offences

Using internet or mobile phone carriers:

- for suicide related material
Maximum penalty: \$100,000
- to make a threat
Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for 7 years
- to menace, harass or cause offence
Maximum penalty: Imprisonment for 3 years.

What schools are doing to protect children

Research shows schools are one of the safest environments for your child. Cyber bullying has been found to occur more often outside of school. It may follow incidents at school.

Provide guidelines

Most schools have clear guidelines about internet access, mobile phone use and student behaviour such as bullying.

Use filters

Schools use filters to guard against students accessing inappropriate material. As filters are not 100% effective, schools can block additional sites if necessary.

Develop programs

Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), Catholic Education South Australia and Association of Independent Schools of SA are developing initiatives in their respective sectors.

What you can do to protect your child

Your school's guidelines regarding internet access can be adapted for home use to ensure your child is safe online.

Talk to your child

Discuss the issue of online safety with your child. Reassure your child that you are there to help if they get into trouble.

Provide safe and supervised access

Consider the best location for your computer. It is recommended that internet access should be in a public place. Make sure you have safety software installed—antivirus, spyware and a firewall.

Monitor e-technology use

Know what sites your child is using to talk and share online. Remind your child that others can access all online and text messaging.

Observe your child's behaviour

Watch for any behaviour changes in your child.

Seek support

Use the contacts in this pamphlet if you are concerned about changes in your child's behaviour. This could include contacting the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to request removal of distressing and inappropriate online information.

Other actions you can take

Update your knowledge

Go to NetAlert, Australia's Internet Safety Advisory Body, at www.netalert.net.au/03547-Advice-Centre.asp for your free information booklet *A parent's guide to internet safety*.

Support Think U Know

NetAlert, together with Microsoft, ninemsn and the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), has launched the Think U Know initiative, designed to raise awareness among Australian children, parents, caregivers and teachers about safety issues on the internet. This initiative is supported by SAPol and the Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools. You can nominate yourself and your school for a free **internet safety education session** by registering online at www.thinkuknow.com.au. Even if your school has already registered, your support is essential for this initiative to be successful. Think U Know will be rolled out from July 2007.