

Does your school have an e-Safety net?

Online safety and implications for schools

Technology is all pervasive in society; we unwittingly use it all the time. From drawing money at an ATM to passing through a toll-gate, computers enable these activities. We have to ask ourselves questions such as “is all information found on the Internet true?” “Are all the people I meet online or when using a cell phone really who they say they are?” “Are children safe when using technology?”

Access to information and communication brings with it a certain responsibility because as much as the world opens up digitally so does it open the darker side of human nature. A couple of issues are that there are many ‘inappropriate’ websites that are easily accessible; moreover people use technology to abuse others. Cyberbullying is a word that is now mainstream – children sending each other hate messages by e-mail or cell phone or even setting up profiles on social networks that encourage others to harm, damage, humiliate or isolate people, including teachers.

“Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others”. [Accessed 4 February 2009 Wikipedia]

WHAT DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE YOU MEET ONLINE?
The simple answer to this is that you would know only what they tell you!
The wolf tried to convince Little Red Riding Hood that he was grandma, and she could see him! The safest thing is to not chat to ANYONE that they don't know from before going online. They should decline any request to add 'identities' that are not known to them from their school or family and friends. They should use privacy settings for social networking sites and be very selective about who they add to their world. They should be encouraged to be selective and to block contacts that make them uneasy or keep on posting offensive content.

WHEN DO I TELL?
That's an easy one...
Tell whenever their cell tells they should!
But for clarity you should mention the following scenarios:
• If they receive any content that makes them uncomfortable like photos or videos containing too much skin of ANY kind
• Any content that describes or depicts violence
• ANY THREAT
• ANY ABUSE.

IN CONCLUSION
This really is the short version. Please don't let media reports influence your attitude towards this form of technology. The reality is that even if they don't own a cell phone they most probably have access to one. They are growing up in an age where technology and communication have become ever-present and is set to become even more so! You can't really keep them away from it but we can teach them to be safe and to use it responsibly.

MOBILED
www.mobiled.org.za

PARENT AND EDUCATOR GUIDE

THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND UPTAKE OF CELL PHONES AMONGST OUR YOUTH NECESSITATES PARENTS AND EDUCATORS TO TAKE ACTION TO MINIMISE THE POTENTIAL RISK OF VICTIMISATION

With the development and proliferation of mobile internet, these risks are potentially greater. This information sheet aims to arm you with the knowledge you need to engage teens and tweens in an important dialogue about the potential dangers and to encourage responsible use of their cell phone.

First off, the cell phone is a wonderful tool to use. It has the potential to keep us in contact, give us access to information; extend our social presence and to help organise our lives. But, as is the case with most tools, their value lies in the hands of the person using it. Young people seem to have a natural affinity for cell phones and are very proficient users, however, they often lack the life skills to navigate the world in all its complexity and are frequently very naive users as well.

DO YOU USE YOUR REAL NAME AND AGE?
In any activities online, chatting or posting, they should never use their name and they should refrain from publishing their age. It can identify them as a potentially vulnerable target. Encourage them to choose a gender neutral virtual name and preferably keep their age offline.
A word on virtual names... they can be very creative and individual without being offensive. "What is in a name?"
A LOT if it is all you know about a person!

ARE YOU SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION?
This conversation should include what is considered to be personal information. Young people may not have the same understanding of what personal information in the context of the WHOLE WIDE WORLD is, only because they have not physically experienced it. There is also a difference between sharing information with your friend who you know from school in a direct conversation and just posting it or sharing it with unknown 'identities'. Even their friends should not be given access to some information such as passwords and account numbers. That is in-house parent or guardian types of personal information.

that 'adult magazines' are available at every corner shop (albeit on a higher shelf).

So what is a school to do? The challenge for teachers is to ensure that they are not only aware of the burgeoning tools available out there but they educate their learners in how and when to use them. Moreover they need to familiarise themselves with how these same tools can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Podcasts (downloadable audio clips) and RSS feeds (notifications of the latest information in any given field) have a wonderful use in education and need to be incorporated. It also encourages plagiarism and teachers need to adapt their teaching style so that this does not happen. Information literacy is key to managing the new environment.

B K W L

Be aware
Be critical of information and advertising.

Keep information about yourself to yourself
Don't ever post your cellphone number, address, name of your school, passwords or information that identifies you.

Rebelling someone you meet online is out
Think twice before responding to messages from people you don't know, don't add them to your contacts and don't arrange to meet them!

Spill out cyber bullying
Don't send/forward hurtful or offensive messages. Don't take photos that are distasteful/embarrassing. Delete/block contacts that keep on leaving inappropriate messages.

Let an adult know if something or someone has made you feel uncomfortable or worried
Go with your gut feel. Discuss it with your parent, your guardian or an educator.

DO'S

KEEP PHONE ON SILENT IN MEETINGS OR CLASS IF YOU'RE EXPECTING AN IMPORTANT CALL. ARRANGE AHEAD OF TIME TO RECEIVE IT.

WHEN YOU ARE WITH A FRIEND ALWAYS ASK IF THEY MIND IF YOU ANSWER A CALL.

RESPECT OTHER'S PRIVACY AND SPACE. ALWAYS ASK BEFORE YOU TAKE A PHOTO OF SOMEONE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY YOU DON'T WANT TO BE IN A PHOTO.

IF YOU CALL SOMEONE ON THEIR CELL PHONE ALWAYS ASK IF THEY CAN TALK & TEXT.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S AIRTIME. CHOOSE A WALL PAPER THAT IS NOT OFFENSIVE.

CHOOSE A VIRTUAL NAME THAT IS NOT OFFENSIVE.

DON'T'S

DON'T TAKE OR MAKE PERSONAL CALLS IN PUBLIC.

MODERATE YOUR VOICE IN PUBLIC, IF YOU CAN'T HEAR, CALL BACK LATER.

DON'T TEXT AT THE TABLE, IN CLASS, OR IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS.

DON'T READ MESSAGES IN THE MOVIES.

DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO ANSWER STRAIGHT AWAY.

DON'T USE SMS LINGO WHEN TEXTING ADULTS.

DON'T BROWSE SOMEONE ELSE'S MESSAGES OR PHOTOS.

DON'T GIVE OUT SOMEONE ELSE'S NUMBER WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.

DON'T SEND A MESSAGE CALL NEW AND THEN CHAT FOR HOURS.

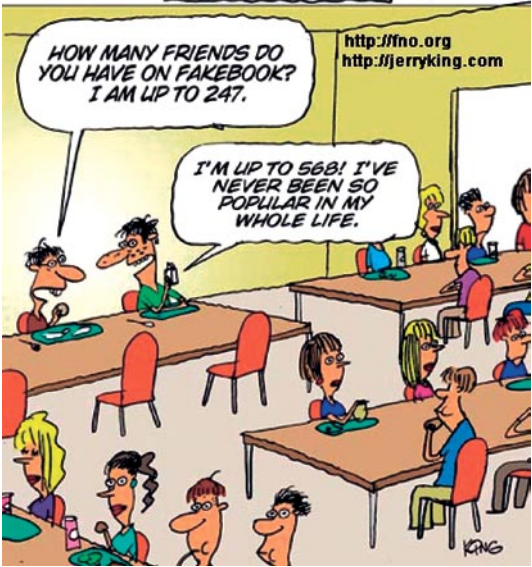
mobile technology can be used to support education. There is a parent and educator guide developed which is a useful and accessible tool for both. Similarly there is the BKWEL poster developed by Grade 8 learners at Cornwall Hill College, both documents made available by Adele Botha, a Senior Researcher at Meraka.

VIRTUAL FRIENDS

HOW MANY FRIENDS DO YOU HAVE ON FACEBOOK? I AM UP TO 247.

I'M UP TO 568! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO POPULAR IN MY WHOLE LIFE.

http://fno.org
http://jerryking.com



“Understanding the technologies/ Changing our behaviours/ Knowing the risks/ Making safe choices”
➡ <http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies>

So what to do about all of this in the educational context? The most pervasive technology of all is the cell phone and what a wonderful tool it is in a country as multilingual and diverse as ours, we love to talk or in the case of the Digital Natives, our children, text. But do we ban cell phones in schools? They are, after all, making the owner a target for theft besides possibly diverting attention away from school work. Do we filter the Internet to the extent that that only ‘white lists’ are used i.e. websites that have been pre-evaluated by teachers? Do we ban social networking, gaming and video streaming? Is this what education is about? One needs to remember that children and young adults are exposed to technology outside the school environment as well as within it, in much the same way

Finally, Europe is well on its way to creating e-safe schools. The website InSafe is an excellent resource and explains Safer Internet Day on 10 February 2009. ➡ http://www.saferinternet.org/www/en/pub/insafe/index.htm	
Some useful websites are:	
Byron Review	➡ http://www.dcsf.gov.za
Berkman Centre for Internet and Society	➡ http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/pubrelease/isttf/extra.html
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre	➡ http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk
ChildNet International	➡ http://www.childnet.int.org
Internet Watch	➡ http://www.iwf.org.uk
Becta e-Safety	➡ http://schools.becta.org.uk/
Ask About Games, parents guide to video games	➡ http://www.askaboutgames.com/
Bullying UK	➡ http://www.bullying.co.uk
Wired Safety	➡ http://www.wiredsafety.org/