Murrays Bay Intermediate School

Student Online Behaviour and Cyber Safety

MBIS is focused on providing a safe environment for our students. We also want to support parents to do the same. Online behaviour and cybersafety is an ongoing concern for parents and teachers and we have prepared the following information to support you at home as you guide your children in their interactions online.

"New Zealand's first-ever report into the economic effect of online harm estimates the cost to individuals, communities and interventions to be $444m every year.

The research undertaken by leading economist Shamubeel Eaqub provides an important new assessment of the damage from online bullying and harassment. To date, cyberbullying has been primarily understood in terms of social cost and personal harm. This report provides a fresh perspective on the size of the problem, and the way it impacts society.

"We know there is significant harm caused to victims of online abuse and harassment," says Netsafe CEO, Martin Cocker. "It frays community cohesion and places additional demands on services like health. What really stands out is the sheer size of the problem, and the way the burden falls upon friends and family. This report gives us a starting point to begin to understand the full impact of this behaviour here in New Zealand, and where to best focus interventions and responses."

*The survey commissioned for the report reveals that **1 in 10 NZ adults have personally experienced online harm,** and that 64% of people are worried about the impact of cyberbullying and its effects on society at large. The full report is below.*

https://www.netsafe.org.nz/cyberbullying-cost/

The Herald also reported recently, based on a study in the US, that cognitive skills were more advanced with children who got between 9-11 hours sleep per night, less than two hours recreational screen time each day and at least an hours exercise daily.

New Zealand statistics report ⅓ of children aged between 14-17 spend more than four hours online each day on non school activities. 70% have experienced one type of unwanted communication and 74% have experienced more than one. 4% of students are sharing their own personal intimate content. 20% are asked for pics or videos around this.

The most common behavioural issues that our deans currently deal with at school are related to online behaviour and social media sites that students generally can't access at school, but do so at home. The problems escalate when students see each other at school. We also have a concern for the long term wellbeing of our students and their levels of self esteem and anxiety.

Common platforms that students are currently using are Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging apps like WhatsApp or Google Hangouts, free chat rooms, Music.ly, Tik Tok, Tellonym…new ones are created all the time.

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook. The minimum age is **13**, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The age restriction of this app means our students shouldn't be accessing it, however we know that many of them do.

At school, we have a problem when it is used to bully other students. We have had instances of students posting forms that ask people to choose who the rudest boy or most mean girl is, or placing people in the 'Keep' or 'Kill' column. Students are arguing back and forth online, using language that is extremely offensive. Students are creating group chats that choose to ostracise, threaten and spread rumours about their classmates. Students sometimes take photos of themselves (sometimes of their body parts) and post these for all to see, including all 300 of their followers when they only personally know 50 of them.
Someone will inform an adult about something serious that is happening at school, and they may then get bullied online for being a snitch. They can also be doing this in the early hours of the morning without parental knowledge.
Followers take screenshots of posts, so even when photos disappear or are taken down by the owner, the comments and photos continue to be passed on and on. We are no longer talking about a "digital footprint" being created, but a "digital tattoo" that could surface many years later.

The Harmful Digital Communications Act, 2015, working closely with Netsafe, states it is illegal to be grossly offensive, threatening, intimidating, or to encourage someone to hurt themselves. As an adult there can be fines of up to $200,000 and up to two years imprisonment for ongoing online bullying.
As a young person who is under 14, you can still be reported to Netsafe and the police, and gain a juvenile record.

We regularly talk to students about being safe online and in their community. We involve the community constable regularly in class lessons and assemblies to educate students about their choices online.
Our messages to students are that if you are allowed to use social media, only be friends with people you know; block or report communication that is nasty or threatening, speak to your parents if you are worried, and only ever post things that:

A-You would be happy with your parents seeing.
B-That are positive messages that are not upsetting or offensive to anyone.

Our message to parents is that if you give permission for your child to be on a social networking site, that you know the log in details and password, and that you very regularly check the conversations online. That devices are not in bedrooms in the evening and you have conversations with your child about the expectations of being online.
Do not hesitate to contact Netsafe for advice and education.

https://www.netsafe.org.nz/hdc-act/
https://www.netsafe.org.nz/?mc_cid=79f1e3e12e&mc_eid=0668c233c8

We regularly get updates from "SmartSocial" which alerts us to what is new online and how this could be managed. Some examples are below.

From **Josh** at SmartSocial.com
How to Limit Screen Time Without Conflict
We asked parents and educators what they were struggling with most when it comes to digital safety and an overwhelming number told us that it's difficult to set screen time limits with their children. It's important to help children build healthy screen time habits, but for many parents and educators that's easier said than done.

We asked 5 experts to share their best tips parents can use to limit screen time.

1. Build a daily routine for your family
Elizabeth Malson, President of Amslee Institute
Parents have a lot to manage and it's easy for kids to get several hours of screen time a day. Depending on the age of the child, it may be challenging to switch from screens to activities. Don't underestimate the power of a bored child, without a screen children usually find something to do-let them be creative. Reducing screen time can help children develop life skills, like how to self-regulate their use of media and have more time to advance academically.

2. Challenge your student to take a one-week vacation/detox from social media
Josh Ochs, SmartSocial
Teach children that social media can (and should) be utilized as a tool for good but that it is important to take breaks from time to time. Challenge your child to consider deleting their Instagram and/or Snapchat from their phone for one week (and take a social media detox/vacation). OR have them unfollow 100 people on Snapchat or Instagram and only follow those they are most close to.

3. Kids should earn time on the internet instead of it just being given to them
Brittany Jean-Louis, LPC, A Freeman's Place Counseling
Part of earning screen time is through creating a behaviour modification system in which kids are required to do something (do chores, complete homework, etc.) to earn something (sleeping over a friend's house, playing online games, getting on the internet, etc.). The

behaviour modification can be a chart created by parents and kids together. The chart can include about three target behaviours. When those target behaviours are met the child can earn screen time. Creating the target behaviours and even the amount of screen time that can be earned should be discussed as a family; kids will feel a part of this process which increases self-esteem and cooperation with something they have collaborated on. Parents should also use strength based language in discussing limits. For instance instead of saying "too much screen time is bad" a parent can say "we know how important it is for a person your age to have access to the internet but we want to ensure that you are well rounded as a person.

4. Set hours and schedule social media blackout days to limit screen time
Justin Lavelle, Chief Communications Officer for BeenVerified
Not setting limits on technology usage is a big mistake. Many parents believe if kids are participating in age appropriate technology everything is fine. Studies show that some kids may have a propensity to become tech addicts. Kids who partake in too much tech time tend to be anxious, have a hard time making and keeping friends, and can develop low self-esteem. It is essential to set hours and schedule blackout days to keep kids involved in real life activities and relationships.

Setting up Parental Controls on your Child's Device (you can monitor and set parameters around apps and sites that can be accessed, the time the internet is available, limit mail to only certain contacts…)

Google your child's device make. For example-for an Apple Mac:
https://www.imore.com/parental-controls-mac-ultimate-guide

Disney Circle **Circle** is the smart way for families to manage content and time online, on any device.

A recent article in the Otago Daily Times discusses a local school encouraging families to buy an App called Family zone which allows them to filter online content on all their children's devices, including phones. Filters were age appropriate and could cut off data at a certain time of day.
Additional Information

It is also important to note that rules, limits and filtering only work so far, and must be combined with teaching resilience, values and attitudes, digital literacy and what to expect online.

When setting up the device, virtual private networks (VPN) should be disabled. Students who have access to these downloads are able to navigate the internet undetected. Not only is this a risk for them, which increases their vulnerability, it also creates logging on issues to our school network which blocks these applications.

Together **we can guide our students and children to navigate this digital world to use technology as a tool to support learning and social interaction, along with a knowledge of how to be safe online.**

Shannon Robinson