Tips for Parents:

- Secure and renew your security software and set it to scan regularly.
- Turn on automatic updates on all software and install/activate a firewall.
- Set up your computer security software to access only approved websites and email addresses.
- Be actively involved in your child's internet use and discuss internet issues as they arise in the media.
- Have an online relationship such as being a friend on Facebook with your child and role model responsible use of technology.
- Conduct regular family discussions about online safety and security. Empower your child to take responsibility for his reputation and media profile.
- Consider downloading the Government's Cybersafety Help Button at www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton. It is an online resource that gives easy access to cybersafety help and information 24/7.
- Monitor internet use in your home by setting rules about the time and place of use. The College insists that students do not access their technological devices during certain times such as recess and lunch. Similar expectations can be established at home, especially at meal times and during family activities.
- Create opportunities for social interaction and insist on your child's participation. Online communication limits the development of the social cues that enable us to be empathetic and intuitive human beings. Body language, voice tone and volume, and physical contact are not part of this medium and need opportunities to be practiced and refined.

Recommended time limit for daily access to non-educational internet use:

    Years 7 - 9   30 minutes
    Years 10 - 12   45 minutes

Internet addiction [continued]

- Talk to your child about why they are spending so much time online and what they are spending their time doing. Encourage participation in other activities, particularly physical activity, and help your child to socialise offline with his peers.
- Consider speaking to the school counsellor. They may be able to provide the necessary support for your child. A referral may need to be made for outside professional assistance.
- The Centre for Online and Internet Addiction, www.netaddiction.com has a very useful site dedicated to helping those with concerns.

References:

www.ag.gov.au/cybersecurity

www.childnet-int.org

www.iCyberSafe.com
- Living in a Connected World

www.lawstuff.org.au/vic

www.onguardonline.gov

www.staysmartonline.gov.au
- 'Protecting Yourself Online – What Everyone Needs to Know' (Aust. Govt. Second Edition)

www.surfnetkids.com/safety/facebook

You can sign up for the free Cyber Security Alert Service at www.staysmartonline.gov.au/alert-service. This provides information on the latest computer network threats and vulnerabilities in easy to understand language.

Teenagers &
Online Safety
Guide for Parents

St Kevin's College

Online

Today technology plays a significant role in the lives of our students, inside and outside of the classroom. The internet offers an exciting world of experiences for children and the whole family. It can be entertaining, educational and rewarding. However, using the internet also involves risks and challenges. Education in the appropriate social behaviours, legal implications and learning potential of online communication should be a joint partnership between home and school as young people are assisted in becoming responsible digital citizens.

Safety and security concerns need to be addressed, including threats to the integrity of identity, privacy issues and the possible exposure to offensive and illegal content. An awareness that anything 'deposited' online has the potential to become permanent yet could also be changed, modified or morphed into something entirely different, needs to be developed. Users' digital reputations are defined by their online behaviour and by the content that they post about themselves and others. A poor digital reputation can affect friendships and relationships, as well as future job prospects.

These guidelines are offered to assist parents in making informed decisions, establishing expectations and gaining confidence in the management of online communications at home.

Tips for Teenagers:

- Common courtesy and common sense are as important online as off.
- Think carefully before replying to any message.
- Use the "Reply all" button with great caution.
- Take caution before you click on links and attachments, particularly in emails and on social networking sites.
- Report or talk to someone about anything online that makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- If you have a concern for the wellbeing of someone online get help. You can contact the Suicide Helpline on 1300 651 251 or www.suicidehelpline.org.au for 24 hour information and crisis intervention. If it is a life threatening and urgent situation, call 000. Victoria Police will do a welfare check if it is deemed warranted.
- Stop and think before you reveal any personal information about yourself, your friends or family.
- Use a strong password (a minimum of eight characters with at least one number and one symbol and a mix of upper and lower case letters) and change it at least twice a year.
- Never share your password, not even with friends.
- Always turn off your internet connection when you are not using it.

Social Networking

Social networking sites are a very popular way for young people to communicate online but bring their own set of risks. They present opportunities to stay in touch with friends, make new contacts and share information and ideas about a range of opinions, but can be a cause of embarrassment, harassment or damage to reputation. These sites offer options to users to control the type of information shared and to manage interaction with others. It needs to be noted that users of social media are not above the law and that comments posted can be the basis of litigation.

Tips for Teenagers:
- Set your online profile to private or "friends only".
- Protect your account with a strong password.
- Have a different password for each social networking site so that if one password is stolen, not all of your accounts will be at risk.
- Think before you post - expect that people other than your friends will see the information .
- Don't post information that would make you or your family vulnerable - such as your date of birth, address, holiday plans, school details.
- Don't post photos of you or your family and friends that may be inappropriate or that your family and friends have not agreed to being posted. Never cause shame or embarrassment to anyone. Photos which reveal the College uniform or other identifying features need to be carefully selected and must not discredit the reputation of individuals or the school.
- Never click on suspicious links, even if they are from your friends who may have inadvertently sent them to you.
- Be wary of strangers - people are not always who they say they are. Limit the number of people you accept as 'friends' to people you know or have met in real life and trust. Never accept a 'friend' request from a stranger.
- Always type your social networking website address into your browser or use a bookmark.
- Remember that any information available about you online is potentially there forever.
- Any post which causes damage to the reputation of the College or impacts on relationships within the community could have implications at school. This includes references to students or staff members and using the names of others fraudulently.

Tips for Parents:
- It is important that you know and understand social media and social networking sites.
- Check the age restrictions of the networking site to ensure legality for your child.
- Help to protect your child from offensive content by installing and maintaining a content filter on your computer or using parental controls on your security software and ensuring your child knows what to do if he comes across offensive content.
- It is crucial not to take a 'good verses bad' stance but rather to educate your child about the effects, both positive and negative.
- Clarify what is appropriate and what is not - this is one of the most important discussions to have with your child. Blocking a website can make it more tempting. A better strategy is to discuss expectations and set boundaries, then regularly monitor their application.
- Empower your child to untag himself from notes and pictures he does not agree with or to request someone to remove something he finds offensive.
- If your child has been harassed or bullied on a social networking site, go to www.cybersmart.gov.au for advice and tips.
- Download the Cybersafety Help Button at www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton.
- Concerns about online behaviour that involves sexual exploitation of a child or other criminal activity, should be reported to your local police or phone Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
- Content of an offensive nature, such as explicit sexual activity, excessive violence, drug use or criminal activity should be reported to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) at www.acma.gov.au/hotline or by calling 1800 880 176. Make sure that you take note of the offensive website's address so that the ACMA can access the online content. You can also contact your local police.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as use of any technology to bully others through the use of text messages, email, internet sites or digital images. Like other forms of bullying, it can result in a targeted person developing social, psychological and learning issues. Unlike other forms of bullying, it can occur 24/7 and a child can be targeted at home. It can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly sent to a large audience. It can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the target so there can be a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

Tips for Teenagers:
- Increase your online security and privacy and block communication with a cyber bully immediately.
- Talk to a trusted adult about any offensive incident and discuss how it made you feel.
- Never respond to negative messages but save the message and the details of the sender.
- Report misuse of personal information to the chat room or message board site host.
- If necessary, create a new address and only share it with family and trusted friends.
- If one of your friends is being cyber bullied, don't spread the messages or contribute to the discussion but tell a responsible adult immediately.
- Visit the Cybersmart online helpline or call the Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800.

Tips for Parents:
- Encourage your child to speak to you about any concerns that arise from his online communication. Children will hesitate telling their parents if they think that the response will be to ban them from use of the internet.
- Print the offensive comment and then delete it from your child's computer so that he does not have to keep reading it and feeling worse.
- Remind your child to have only people they know and trust as online friends/contacts.
- If your child has been harassed or bullied on a social networking site, go to www.cybersmart.gov.au for advice.
- If, as a result of cyber bullying, your child seems distressed or shows changes in behaviour or mood, seek professional help. A free, online counselling service for young people is available through Cyber Smart Online Hotline at www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx.
- Consider informing the school of any cyber bullying incident and asking for assistance.
- Consult the Student Welfare section of the College Diary for prevention strategies and response.
- If there is a threat to your child's safety, the police should be informed. If it is a life threatening and time critical situation, call 000.

Sexting

Sexting usually refers to the taking of naked or partly naked or sexually suggestive photos or videos of yourself and sending the photos either via the internet or mobile phone; and receiving or forwarding such photos or videos through mobile phones, internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or MySpace. Sending or possessing these images is a crime if the image is of someone under 18 years of age. This is called child exploitation or child pornography. The penalties can be quite serious.

Tips for Teenagers:
- Do not send sexually suggestive, naked or partly naked photos or videos of yourself.
- Consider how you would feel if your teachers, family and friends were to receive these images.
- Think about the long term impact on future job and career prospects if these images were reproduced.
- If you receive such images you should delete them immediately.
- Never forward these images as you may be charged with distributing child pornography.
- If you know the sender, let them know that you do not want to receive these kinds of images
- If the problem persists, speak to a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher or school counsellor. The Kids Helpline could be contacted on 1800 551 800.
- These incidents are regulated by criminal law and as such can be reported to the police.

Internet addiction

There is a range of terms that have been applied to those who spend excessive amounts of time online at the expense of and to the detriment of other aspects of their lives. The obsessive behaviour takes the form of particular activities including gambling, gaming and maintaining online relationships at the expense of real-life family and friends. Essentially, anyone with access to the internet can become dependent upon it regardless of age or gender. The internet and mobile technologies offer many attractions with 24 hour a day accessibility and the opportunity for anonymity and an escape from reality. It is recognised that internet addiction may also be symptomatic of other problems such as depression, anger and low self-esteem. Problems associated with this condition can include skipping meal time with the family, losing sleep, neglecting studies and other activities, and a deterioration in school performance and relationships.

Tips for Parents:
- Insist on the presence of your child at family activities like meal time and celebrations. Such rituals reinforce identity and connection.
- Don't ban the internet - it is an important part of your child's social life. Instead, establish reasonable rules about where your child can go online and what they can do there. Expectations might include an internet time log or no access until homework is completed.