Take It Home Resource Pack

About eSafety for Kids

As you know, years 5 & 6 is an interesting time for kids as they start facing a swathe of changes as a result of puberty. As their bodies and hormones change, so do their brains. At this age, they're wired to take more risks, try new things and reach out to new people.

This makes this age group particularly vulnerable to online risks. That's why we've created this package of resources to help schools, parents/caregivers and kids create safer environments for them to live, learn and play in.

The eSafety for Kids package has been designed to empower young people to take control of their safety and encourage them to be more responsible and respectful in their interactions with others. It uses a harm-minimisation approach, rather than seeking to frighten students into avoiding particular online interactions altogether. Used correctly, these resources will give students the language and tools they need to monitor their digital worlds and have important conversations with trusted adults, parents and/or caregivers.

Many online safety issues are most often faced by young people outside of school. So, it is important that families work with the school closely to ensure consistent implementation. While some parents have exceptional digital literacy and can handle a lot of this on their own, in most cases, it is essential that schools provide a well-rounded education in online safety so that all young people can know how to protect themselves and others. The Take It Home Resource Sheets will help you continue your child's learning at home.

The eSafety for Kids education package

The eSafety for Kids education package was developed in consultation with a team of experts, including a child and adolescent psychologist, education specialist, teachers, parents and in reference to the latest research and guidelines (at time of publication). It is designed to align with the recommendations in the Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education (eSafety Commissioner).

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The package includes a [School Facilitation Guide](#) to support a whole-school approach and a [Take It Home Resource Pack](#) for parents/caregivers. These resources support six eSafety lessons exploring topics such as consent, grooming, catfishing and sexting. We recommend completing the lesson as a unit in this order:

1. [Know The Internet](#)
2. [You Decide](#)
3. [Feeling Fishy Online](#)
4. [Express Yourself Safely](#)
5. [My Social Brain](#)
6. [Cleaning Up](#)

School staff and parents/caregivers can find additional support by undertaking the free online course, [Teaching Consent to Children](#) and referring to the scenario-specific [Teacher Factsheets](#) and/or [Parent Factsheets](#).

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Part A: What to expect from your school

Talking to children about their safety can raise some uncomfortable thoughts for parents and caregivers. Leaning into this discomfort while becoming more informed is the best possible way to ensure you are equipped to support your child as they navigate the challenges of the world. The eSafety for Kids education package is designed to help teachers and parents/caregivers begin conversations with children that will help them become more aware of how to protect themselves in an increasingly digital and public environment.

Whilst it can be daunting for some parents/caregivers to confront technologies they may be unfamiliar with, it is important that you are involved in the digital life of your child/children, as you are the person who can best monitor their online use. With support from your school, the eSafety for Kids education program will help build your confidence and skills alongside your child/children's.

What to expect from your school:
- Invitation to attend an introductory workshop
- Facilitation of the development of a cyber safety agreement for the school community
- Delivery of the eSafety For Kids lessons in class
- Communication with you about the progress of the program and your child(ren)'s involvement so as to facilitate the Take It Home tasks at the appropriate time.

Your involvement in the program:
- Attend an introductory workshop at the school
- Work with your school to develop and implement a cyber safety agreement
- Complete all 'Take It Home' tasks with your kid/s
- Monitor your child(ren)'s online activities on an ongoing basis and continue conversations with them about safety.

If you have found these resources independently from your school, you can use this [email template](#) to encourage your school to deliver the eSafety for Kids program.

Part B: Communicating with teachers

Before delivering these lessons, the staff at your child's school will have met to plan a consistent approach across classes. They will also ensure that any support staff, such as nurses, counsellors, and wellbeing officers, are familiar with the content to ensure that any questions or worries that arise in students will be quickly and appropriately addressed.

Your child's teacher will be able to explain how these lessons cover essential curriculum content for years 5 and 6. You may feel more comfortable seeing how these lessons are age-appropriate and relevant to your child's life.

You can support the teaching of these lessons by sharing with teachers your knowledge of where your child currently spends time online. This can help personalise the unit to ensure it is relevant and thus meaningful.

Part C: Communicating with your child/ren

Note: The following ideas will be easily implementable when you have completed the Take It Home activities that accompany this learning program:

What not to do:
As your children reach adolescence, it is natural for them to start exploring their identity and lean into their social circle, along with finding greater excitement in taking risks than they may have in the past. Pairing this with easy access to social media and communication apps may seem like a recipe for disaster, but you'll find that banning these tools completely or choosing to act like you don't know your child is using them may actually lead to even riskier behaviour.

Instead, it is better to take the time to talk to your kid/s about using apps cautiously and letting them know where to go if something goes wrong. You can try:

- Work together to set boundaries. Giving agency and showing your kid that you trust their input helps them feel they're not just having rules imposed on them unnecessarily.
- Explain why you've set the rules you have. Talk about some of the statistics they/you have learnt through the eSafety For Kids program and have a conversation around these.
- Have regular smaller conversations when something relevant comes up, rather than just 'the talk' about tricky people or posts.
- Make it a conversation, not a lecture.

Part D: Keeping your child/ren safe

Online safety

As with all fashion, the places where children spend their time online are constantly changing. Because of this, it is better to have some general rules about their time online rather than naming specific sites or apps – remember that risk-taking adolescent brain we spoke about? Finding loopholes in rules sounds like just the thing for that, doesn't it? Instead, try:

- Limiting their access to online activities when you're not around. This can be harder if your kid has their own phone or device, so it's worth also explaining why you're doing this and linking back to the content of this unit of work.
- Ensure you're given access to any login details to monitor what your kid is sharing and who they're talking to. You can make this more palatable by showing your kid that there are actually age restrictions on many of the apps and accounts they have, so this is actually a requirement!
- Make sure your kids know how to block and report anything that is making them uncomfortable.
- Make use of parental controls on devices. Your school might be able to help you learn how to do this.

Offline safety

Although the boundaries between kids' online and physical social relationships are pretty blurred, there are still different expectations for where these interactions will occur. Even if your child has what seems to be a genuine online friendship, which they are open to you about and you have checked in with, you should still ensure your child knows the following:

- As a minor, never make plans to meet someone for the first time alone. If you do plan on meeting up with someone you've met online, let them know you'll be going with a trusted adult and ask that they bring one along too.
- Always arrange to meet in a public place where there will be other people around.

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- Let them know that because it's easy to exaggerate or curate an identity online, their friend may not be exactly like they expect, and that's okay. If they decide they don't want to pursue a friendship with someone, or if someone insists on meeting outside the online world but they aren't comfortable with that, the best thing is to respond with kindness, letting them know they do not want to take the relationship any further.

Part E: Where to get help

If your child needs support with these topics, the best place to start is with your school wellbeing team. They can refer your child to a counsellor or psychologist if needed. Alternatively, these details will be provided to students by their school, and you can also contact these numbers with them if needed:

eSafety Kids (eSafety Commissioner)
This website contains some advice for tricky situations. It will refer you to Kids Helpline for support, but you can report cyberbullying on their page.
Website: https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids

Kids Helpline
Kids Helpline provides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week phone and online counselling service for Australian children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.
Website: http://www.kidshelp.com.au/
Phone: 1800 551 800

Headspace
The National Youth Mental Health Foundation provides information and advice for young people going through difficulties through their Headspace centres and online and telephone support services
Website: https://www.eheadspace.org.au/
Phone: 1800 650 890

If any information or conversations during the delivery of the eSafety for Kids program trigger your own trauma or memories of abuse or assault, we strongly encourage you to reach out for help to a professional therapist. Some organisations that can also help you are:

Blue Knot Foundation
Blue Knot Foundation is a national specialist service that provides over-the-phone counselling, information and support for adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse. Their Helpline operates Monday – Sunday 9am to 5pm.
Website: https://www.blueknot.org.au/
Phone: 1300 657 380

1800RESPECT
1800RESPECT is a national counselling helpline that offers support and information around domestic violence and sexual assault 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Website: https://www.1800respect.org.au/
Phone: 1800 737 732

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Part F: About online child sexual exploitation

About eSafety
Research released by the eSafety Commission in 2021 indicates that by the time they are teenagers, Australian students spend around two hours per day online and have up to four social media accounts. Three in ten have experienced unwanted online contact from a stranger, and two in ten have received unwanted content through their social media channels (eSafety Commissioner, 2021).

As they reach secondary school age, young people are likely to be spending more time online, for education purposes, connection with family and friends and relaxation activities. This may result in young people being at a higher risk of child sexual exploitation.

Younger students, especially those who have grown up with devices and social media, are likely to feel comfortable sharing a lot of personal information online. They may not understand the potential for unwanted contact that this can create.

Although it can be a challenging topic to consider in the primary years, it is important that children are provided with opportunities to identify where there may be risks when participating in online activities, and how to feel comfortable reporting tricky people and situations.

When considering eSafety, it might be tempting to simply limit a child's access to devices and the internet, but a Young and Well CRC paper (2014) found that it is important to balance risk with opportunity, stating:

"Children's safety in connected media is vital but needs to be understood in the context of the spectrum of their digital rights, for example, in balance with children's rights of provision and participation in the UNCRC. Agency is as crucial to positive, effective use of digital media as safety is. Without the agency needed to participate and exercise rights, children can neither take advantage of the opportunities digital media afford nor develop resiliency when facing risks. They must be allowed opportunities to think critically and develop their own language, views, strategies, associations and interests as users of connected digital media" (source).

About online child sexual exploitation
"Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them.

Sexual exploitation is a real threat for children and young people of all ages and backgrounds.

It often involves situations and relationships where young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim." (State Government of Victoria).

About eSafety

Research from the Australian Centre to Counter Child Sexual Exploitation (ACCCE, February 2020) stated that "in 2018, the ACCCE Child Protection Triage Unit received almost 18,000 reports of child sexual exploitation, each of which can contain hundreds or thousands of images and videos" ([source](#)). The paper also indicated that 30% of four-year-old children who use the internet (80%) have access to their own devices. This research indicates that parents and teachers need to keep up with these trends and the risks that they pose to our children, in order to keep them safe.

As adults, we can have a difficult time believing that online child sexual exploitation is a very stark reality that many children face. Due to their naivety, they are particularly vulnerable to believing that strangers are who they say they are. Knowledge is your greatest weapon against child sexual exploitation.

Learn more about how to protect your child here:
- https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents
- https://www.thinkuknow.org.au/