

CYBER-BULLYING

School expels girls over cyber bullying

David Mark, ABC "Lateline" 7 May 2009

Two adolescent girls have been forced out of one of Sydney's elite private schools because of cyber bullying. The girls were taken out of Ascham school after they published material about their classmates on the MySpace social networking site. The material included rumours about the girl's sexual activity and their drug and alcohol use.

A parent of one the girls targeted says his daughter was horrified when strange boys began approaching her in public.

The post on the social networking site MySpace goes well beyond school-ground teasing. Some entries set out in explicit detail claims of sexual behaviour and drug and alcohol use. In each case the names of girls and in many instances those of their sexual partners were published.

In a statement to Lateline, the school wrote: "We were shocked and deeply concerned about this incident and acted as swiftly as we became aware of it last Friday."

Dr Marilyn Campbell, Qld University of Technology said: "We actually think cyber bullying could be more damaging than face-to-face bullying because of the wider audience, because of the power of the written word, because of the 24-7 nature, and because of the 'disinhibition' that some students feel."

Ascham does have measures in place to try to stop cyber bullying. The school bans its students from using social networking websites on school computers and has held presentations on the subject. Several students also take part in a Federal Government cyber-bullying program, but Ascham acknowledges there's a limit to what schools can do to stop children using social networking sites, and experts agree.

"It is very difficult to stop them," said Dr Campbell. "In fact, what we actually need to do is more about educating them of why this is so harmful and why it's so hurtful."

Read entire transcript: <http://tinyurl.com/p4jaug>

What can we do about cyber-bullying?

Marilyn Campbell, ABC Radio "Unleashed" 16 April 2009

If we are all going to work towards reducing bullying and especially cyber-bullying then we all have to know what it is and what it is not.

Not only do many adults confuse fighting and bullying but they also confuse cyber-bullying and paedophilia. They think that anything bad which happens via technology like paedophilia, pornography, Internet addiction and cyber-bullying are the same. They are not and that is important because the solutions for different problems are different.

Even if we all agree on what bullying and cyber-bullying is there is no easy and quick-fix solution. Bullying and cyber-bullying are historical, deeply embedded, complex social relationship problems.

Technological solutions are not going to significantly reduce cyber-bullying. Blocking and deleting bullying comments is like being told to ignore the bullying. Like, just ignore the pain and humiliation and don't complain.

So is there anything positive that we can do?

Yes there are things that we can do to reduce bullying and cyber-bullying. But if we agree bullying is a complex pattern of social relationships modelled in our society, then everybody has to be involved - parents, schools, governments and students.

Read entire transcript: <http://tinyurl.com/cjsl7m>

Fighting back at cyber-bullying

Canberra Times 16 May 2009 (AAP)

Deborah Brown from the Child Health Promotion Research Centre at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia says studies show up to 25% of young Australians have been bullied online. Cyber-bullying can have various definitions but it often refers to the use of mobile phones or the internet to send abusive or degrading messages or images.

A study by the centre called Friendly Schools Bullying Intervention Project found early intervention and education involving an entire school reduced reported bullying behaviours. Dr Brown directs the Cyber Friendly Schools project, which aims to engage parents, students and the wider community to develop strategies to reduce cyber-bullying. She says it is reasonable to hope bullying can be stamped out.

“The more people communicate about this problem, the more young people are encouraged to talk to other people, the less it’s going to happen,” she said.

Read more about the Friendly Schools Bullying Intervention project, including the publications from the research: <http://tinyurl.com/patd2p>

Read about the next step, Friendly Schools & Friendly Families: The bullying intervention program that really works at: <http://tinyurl.com/pu9g8g>

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Bullying of Children & Young People

NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People Gillian Calvert told the Inquiry - which commenced in December 2008 and will report later this year, “There is a lot of bullying and competition in our world, which kids observe and model themselves on.”

She said technology shouldn’t be blamed for online harassment.

“It’s a new platform which has some particular features about it which can make the impact of the bullying much greater than it might be if it was confined to a sports area or the schoolyard.”

Ms Calvert hopes bullying can become a rare event through early intervention.

“One of the most critical things we can do is to help our children to learn how to control their impulses and regulate their feelings. What happens in those early years really sets them up for the rest of their lives.”

Source: AAP article (above) published in Canberra Times 16 May 2009

Find out more about the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry, including dates and transcripts of public hearings and read submissions online: <http://tinyurl.com/p4aclw>

Are You a Cyber-smart Parent?

How You And Your Family Can Make The Most Of The Internet, While Protecting Your Children From The Worst.

The internet offers a fantastic new world of experience for your kids. It can be fun, educational and rewarding. But, like the real world, the internet also has its dangers.

Just as we encourage kids to behave in certain ways when dealing with strangers, watching television, or buying magazines in the real world, we also need to guide them how to act appropriately online.

Cyber-smart Kids Online offers a host of tips to help you and your family get the most out of the net safely:

From the Website <http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au> – an information resource for children, parents and teachers developed by the Australian Communications Authority – including an array of online teaching and learning resources for schools at: <http://tinyurl.com/pnh36u>



AMTA: Working with parents and children to cope with cyber-bullying

Randal Markey, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA)

Children these days use mobile phones as if they were second nature. They have mastered the technology and can use a wide range of applications, including social networking and accessing the internet. They are short on life skills and experience, but in the technology stakes they know it all. But with this facility goes a capacity for misuse which leads to unacceptable things like cyber-bullying.

Parents, on the other hand, struggle to keep up with their children when it comes to technology, including mobile phones. However, they know a thing or two about how the world works and what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

The mobile telecommunications industry in Australia aims to achieve an economically successful industry. The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) is the industry's peak body. Its role and charter is much broader than just the bottom line.

People everywhere use mobile telecommunications technologies as an important part of their lifestyles and the way they interact with family, friends, work and the community. We know parents value mobile phones as a way of staying in touch with their children. We believe that the positive aspects of mobiles far outweigh the negative.

However, we are committed to providing practical advice to help prevent the misuse and promote the safe, responsible and affordable use of mobile telecommunications.

Read more at <http://www.acsso.org.au/amta090519.pdf>

PARENTAL INTERNET CONTROL

Internet Filtering and Monitoring Software

In January 2008 Choice, the magazine of the Australian Consumers Association, tested 15 internet filtering products: Cyber Patrol, CYBERSitter, Cyber Sentinel, Filterpak, Integard, iProtect You, K9 Web Protection, NetMop, NetNanny 5, Optenet Web Filter, ParentalControl Bar, Parental Filter, Safe Eyes (Mac), Safe Eyes (PC) and We-Blocker.

While viewing the full results of the test requires paid access to Choice online (<http://www.choice.com.au>), the following points in summary were made available free:

- Net filtering can help prevent children from accessing undesirable web content.
- Net filters aren't foolproof and may not block all types of content.
- They can mistakenly filter out 'safe' content and sites.
- They're not a substitute for proper parental supervision.
- Some free software can perform as well as commercial programs.

Since then, a number of products have emerged that focus on positively managing the relationship between parents, children and the web. Bearing in mind the advice of the Australian Consumers Association, newer filtering and monitoring systems worth exploring include:

Kidswatch

KidsWatch parental control software is your fastest and easiest solution to safeguard your children's Internet experience and maximize the efficiency of the time they spend on the computer.

Parents can set computer usage time limits, by child; ensuring homework is a priority over:

- Internet chats, including Instant Messaging.
- YouTube, FaceBook and MySpace Web Visits.
- Online Gaming, Gaming Software Downloads, Music Downloads, and more.

Read more at <http://www.kidswatch.com>