

## What if my child experiences problems online?

If you are worried about your safety or the safety of another person there are plenty of places where you can talk about this and get some help.

**Crisis Care** (08) 9223 1111  
24 hour service 1800 199 008

**Family Helpline** (08) 9223 1100  
24 hour service 1800 643 000

**Parenting WA Line** (08) 6279 1200  
24 hour service 1800 654 432

**Kids Helpline** 1800 551 800

You can also call these services if you just want to talk with someone and get some more information about how to stay safe in cyberspace.

If you are aware of inappropriate behaviour or content online, you can report this to the site administrator.

If you are concerned that your child may be the target of online grooming, contact the Online Child Exploitation Squad via the Police Assistance Centre on 131 444.

If you have information about online criminal activities, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.



## Looking for more information?

**Cyber smart website**  
W: [cybersmart.gov.au](http://cybersmart.gov.au)

**Stay smart online**  
W: [staysmartonline.gov.au](http://staysmartonline.gov.au)

**Australian Federal Police**  
W: [thinkyouknow.org.au](http://thinkyouknow.org.au)

**Bullying No Way**  
W: [bullyingnoway.com.au](http://bullyingnoway.com.au)

**Reach Out**  
W: [reachout.com.au](http://reachout.com.au)

**Childnet resources**  
W: [childnet.com/kia/](http://childnet.com/kia/)

# Helping your child stay safe in cyber space



Government of Western Australia  
Department for Child Protection



This publication has been developed in conjunction with  
the Department of Health and the Western Australia Police.

## Helping your child stay safe in cyber space

Children are using mobile phones and the internet to socialise with and keep in touch with their friends. While your children may never have a negative experience, it is important that parents are aware of the potential dangers of cyber space.

As a parent, there are lots of things you can do to help your children stay safe in cyber space. In Western Australia, a number of state government agencies provide services to assist parents to keep their children safe.

## The internet

The internet opens a world of opportunities for children but the lack of physical boundaries may impact on their safety. Be cyber savvy!

- » Keep computers out of bedrooms. By having the computer in a central place you can keep an eye on what your children are doing online.
- » Show an interest in what your children are doing. Chat with them about which sites they like best and the social networking sites they use to keep in touch with friends.
- » Check out sites together and look at the terms and conditions. Use it as an opportunity to talk with your children about how to be safe online and the ways they can protect their identity.
- » Set rules. As a family, make an internet policy which outlines the amount of time children can spend online, which sites are safe, which sites are appropriate and what information they should be sharing online.
- » Make sure your children know never to post personal information online. Talk with them

about the importance of keeping friendships online only with people they know in their everyday lives.

- » Remind your children that people are not always who they say they are and that it is important that you accompany them if they wish to meet someone they have met online.
- » Learn about web protection. This allows you to manage your children's access to internet sites. It also allows you to control the privacy settings on your computer.

The most important thing is to talk to your children about cyber safety. Know what your children are doing, be aware of the risks your children may be exposed to when online, and watch out for inappropriate behaviour.

## Mobile phones

Mobile phones allow you to stay in contact with your children and you may feel more comfortable knowing you can reach them at all times.

Talk with your children about keeping themselves safe when using their mobile phones. Discuss:

- » That it is important to not share their PIN with anyone.
- » Who they should give their mobile phone numbers to and that they should never post phone numbers online.
- » Ways to maintain their personal safety, such as not giving out personal information over the phone to people they do not know and not responding to unwanted calls or SMS.
- » How important it is to keep mobile phones in a safe place and not to leave them lying around where anyone can use them.

## Potential online risks

### Cyber stalking

Cyber stalkers use mobile phones and/or the internet to harass, intimidate and threaten others. Cyber stalkers may impersonate victims online or encourage others to harass and intimidate victims by sending or posting inappropriate materials.

### Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can occur by sending nasty texts, emails, instant messaging and website links. Cyber bullying is more prevalent and difficult to manage because it is faceless and has no boundaries.

As children are dependent on their mobile phones and computers for socialising and communicating with friends, they may not tell you if they are being cyber bullied for fear that you may restrict or remove their access to this technology.

### Online predatory behaviour

The internet and social networking sites can provide opportunities for people to make contact with children for sexual purposes. This is known as online grooming.

### Sexting

Sexting is when children send sexually explicit or suggestive photographs of themselves or other people.

Often these images are sent between couples or friends, however they can be shared with others without the person's permission, leading to serious social ramifications for the child. This may also constitute a criminal offence.