

## PARENTING IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Useful information and strategies to help parents

1. Be alert to the young person seeming upset after using the Internet or their phones. This might involve subtle comments or changes in relationships with friends.
2. Consider where young people use the computer or tablet or phone, it is harder to be aware of online behaviour if it is always behind closed doors.
3. Use parental controls on computers and keep passwords safe so that young people cannot access inappropriate sites.
4. Encourage victims of cyberbullying to keep evidence of any offending emails, text messages or online activity. They could help identify the bully.
5. Advise children to resist the temptation to retaliate/respond, no matter how strong the desire to do so may be. Retaliation is likely to make things worse and could lead the victim into getting into trouble or breaking laws.
6. Suggest that arguments from the real world should never be carried into cyberland. It is much better to resolve the problem face to face than mount an attack online.
7. Use the tools offered by the service provider, for example only allowing personal profiles to be viewed by accepted 'friends' or reporting anything received that is offensive. In addition, always be sure to turn on in-built computer security features, including parental controls to help manage online activity.
8. Users of the Internet should not accept people as 'friends' on sites like My Space unless they know them in the real world.
9. Promote online responsibility and at all times offer the same good manners and respect online as would be expected in the real world.
10. Help young people identify someone trustworthy to talk to and ask for support should they become the victim of a cyberbully.
11. Report any online bullying in social networking sites to the service provider. Remember, they want to be known as a safe environment for people to meet, not a bullying background.
12. Report cyberbullying: contact the relevant person at the child's school if it involves another pupil. Most organisations will have an anti-bullying policy and cyberbullying should be included in this
13. Report cyberbullying: contact the relevant person at the child's school if it involves another pupil. Most organisations will have an anti-bullying policy and cyberbullying should be included in this.

13. Contact the police when serious threats are made, particularly if they include violence. Keep any evidence and get support from a trusted adult. A criminal offence may have been committed.

14 Try to keep communication open and encourage young people to talk about the way in which they are using the Internet and their phones. Victims need the language to be able to express what has happened to them, to know that it's wrong and to be able to tell someone.