

Cyber Safety in Action – Teacher’s resource

These scenarios are designed to help to create conversation starters during class after Internet Safe Education has presented.



Key Messages

- The internet is **PUBLIC** and **PERMANENT**
- My identity is paramount
- Online contacts remain strangers
- Online rules and laws are real
- I take action when things go wrong online

1 – John has made sexist comments on several social media sites. His opinions are often offensive and sometimes threatening. He is applying for a job at a local fast-food restaurant. How is his social media profile likely to impact his application?

- Discussion points
 - Depends on when they look at his social media accounts. He may get to interview but it could stop him from getting a job once they have seen the comments or posts. Why?
 - Australian employers have an obligation to the health and safety of their staff under Australian law. Expression of sexist comments in a workplace may lead to harm of co-workers who feel offended or threatened.
 - Discriminatory behaviour is unlawful, and an employer will not risk John becoming a workplace problem.
 - Even if this is all words and John’s actions do not indicate such beliefs, his social media profile will be sufficient to make him a risk not worth taking.
 - **Freedom to share his views** versus **future job prospects** and his **online reputation**.
- **Can John stop a potential employer from seeing his social media posts?**
 - Settings can be used to secure an account and improve privacy settings however there are things an individual can’t control. For example, where they are tagged by someone else or whether their comments appear on someone else’s posts. Often people use settings well in one app but poorly in others. Consistent poor online behaviour will usually appear.
 - Fast-food outlets often use students from the same schools due to location. The interviewer or manager will have access to children John may not choose as a referee. Those children may be connected to John on social media and choose to show the manager their concerns.

2 – Jane is new at school. She experienced prolonged cyberbullying at the old school. Jane is very private at school so Anita tries to find Jane online. Anita finds what had been happening, despite Jane’s efforts to close her accounts and change her online profiles. What should Anita do?

- Discussion points
 - Acknowledge that we look each other up online.
 - Past online harm and that such harm can lead to mental health concerns and worse.
 - Preferred response –
 - Tell no one unless it becomes relevant to Jane’s wellness. It isn’t Anita’s story to tell. Be kind to Jane at school. Be kind in her new online accounts. Show her compassion and respect but allow her to move on.
- **How might this go badly?**
 - Anita shares the information with others at the school, particularly if done with the intent to continue the poor treatment. Consider her mental health and wellbeing and school and legal consequences for cyberbullying or in person bullying.

3 – Josh has been withdrawing from his friends. He’s being aggressive, sad, and negative. He won’t come to anything with his friends anymore and hardly ever just hangs out and has fun. He is on his phone on breaks and leaves class regularly. What might be happening with Josh?

- Discussion points
 - Content concerns for teens is a growing problem. Hate sites, radicalised content, conspiracies, harmful user-generated content such as drugs, violence, pornography, self-harm and suicide. All of this can normalise extreme behaviour, cause mental distress and lead to poor outcomes for the teen.
 - He may be getting bullied, radicalised, or becoming addicted to gaming or pornography. He may be experiencing mental health problems and avoiding people.
- **What protective actions could Josh’s friends take?**
 - Offer support to Josh. Encourage him to seek assistance. Ask questions about what he’s doing on his phone and who he’s interacting with – show interest in what interests him. Notice what he’s saying and where he is online.
 - Tell an adult you trust. Anxiety, depression, and addiction are best addressed.

4 – Terry and Grace have been dating. Terry sends Grace a sexually explicit picture and asks Grace to do the same. What should Grace do and how does consent factor into this situation?

- Discussion points
 - Remember that images are for ever and today’s relationships are tomorrow’s potential problem. Images are permanent and people can use images to extort further action or embarrass or shame in the future.
 - Grace did not consent to receiving an image. Sending the image is disrespectful and possibly causes harm, distress and/or fear. It is equivalent to indecent exposure.
 - Grace is the ONLY one who can decide to say no. Any further pressure indicates Terry’s lack of respect and care.
 - **Research indicates about 1/3 of girls who are asked eventually sent the picture, and most instantly regretted it. Don’t be one of the 1/3. Don’t believe ‘everyone’ is.**¹
- **What does the law say about taking inappropriate pictures of children that may be considered child exploitation materials?**

¹ Biddulph, S. 2017 ‘10 Things Girls Need Most’ Simon & Schuster, London. p.138

- It is against the law to take, store or share them. The age of 'child' differs between states.

This may feel uncomfortable to teach however it is happening and it's best to get in front of the conversation. Give them the tools to not do it or stop doing it. Seeing the parallel to the physical world example can shock and refocus the perception of 'everyone is doing it' and what 'it' really is. When it's digital, it is potentially accessible everywhere... Forever.