

## 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 – Alex has changed. He has become more withdrawn, angry, and disappears from class. He’s not interested in the things he used to do and has new online friends and is in new online groups. Some of his ideas are causing you concern and you worry about his mental well-being. You worry about what he’s up to online and who he’s talking to. What issues come to mind regarding Alex’s situation and online activity?**

- Discussion points – (online) reasons for social withdrawal and mental health concerns
  - The content is deliberately vague. See what comes up in their minds.
  - Algorithms are designed to commodify your time. You will be sent more of the content you spend more time reading, therefore specific ideas can be reinforced artificially. This can lead to strong opinions based on little to no reliable evidence. Conspiracy theories, radicalisation, normalisation of hate speech/sexism/violence/racism etc. These can make people feel isolated in their physical life as their friends don’t appear to be ‘like them’ anymore.
  - Online addiction - social media, gaming, gambling, shopping, pornography – become all consuming and impact every aspect of daily life and enjoyment.
  - Bullying. Depression. Anxiety. Eating issues. Self-harm. Suicide.
- **What can you do to help?**
  - Try to find out where Alex is hanging out online.
  - Let Alex know you’re worried and what behaviours you’ve been witnessing.
  - Seek support from Alex’s friends and family. Talk to a trusted adult at school.
  - Problems that start in the digital world have huge impact on our physical world.

**2 – Sam has strong opinions and voices them online, on many platforms. Sam posts selfies and photos of weekend parties and follows influencers with polarising views. How might this information impact Sam’s ability to get a job?**

- Discussion points
  - It would depend on the opinions and views being expressed. Consider what might be problematic content. Social media job screening checks are looking for evidence of toxic (poor self-regulation, hate speak, aggression), inappropriate, discrimination (race/gender/religion/sexuality), bad mouthing teachers or other employers, or inappropriate sharing of information (poor discretion). Illegal activity such as drug use,

underage drinking, sexualised images, or links to pornography. Too frequent posting online. An individual's online identities are used to check more broadly on the internet for further evidence of beliefs and conduct.

- Social media profiles are seen as tools to decide cultural fit. Australian employers have an obligation to the **health and safety** of their staff under Australian law. **Discriminatory behaviour** is unlawful. Expression of sexist, racist, sexual, or similar comments in a workplace may lead to harm of co-workers who feel offended or threatened. Any hint of any of these issues will make Sam a risk not worth taking.
- **Freedom to share** views versus **future job prospects** and **online reputation**.

NB – no gender given in the above scenario. Play it out to see if they make assumptions and whether the applicant's gender might change what the students believe matters to the employer. Points to bias and perceptions to challenge.

**3 – Kylie has 1000s of followers and posts many times a day. She checks interactions and monitors comments. Her phone is active all through class. She knows 'risky' photos get the most attention. Her comments are designed to create tension and are deliberately nasty or inflammatory. Kylie is 17. What are the implications of this situation for Kylie?**

- Discussion points
  - Social media addiction (online addiction takes many forms – social media, gaming, gambling, shopping, pornography).
  - Insults, threats or abuse may cause harm. Our brains are wired to keep the negative comments and delete the positive. Her behaviour is likely to invite retaliation.
  - Everything posted (images and words) are potentially permanent and public. Visible to future employers and others who may otherwise have provided an opportunity.
  - People will make assumptions about Kylie based on her public persona.
  - Her self-worth and self-image are tied to outside and artificial opinions. (They know intellectually that it shouldn't matter what other people say however it's hard to really live by the idea that our self-worth is internal derived, especially when we go looking for that external validation. It's a revolving door of disappointment.)

**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? 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 the 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 send the picture, and most instantly regret it. Don't be one of the 1/3. Don't believe 'everyone' is.**<sup>1</sup>
- **What does the law say about taking inappropriate pictures of children that may be considered child exploitation materials?**

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<sup>1</sup> Biddulph, S. 2017 '10 Things Girls Need Most' Simon & Schuster, London. p.138

- o 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.