

# CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATIONS AND INTERNET ACCESS

## GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATIONS

### **Background:**

Pedophiles use the internet to prey on children. Evidence in Australia indicates that what is posted on an internet site or published in a magazine or newspaper is used by paedophiles to target children, to locate them and the information that is presented is used as a tool to assist with grooming. The end result is that in spite of the best intentions in the world on the part of the publisher, children end up being the victims of abuse.

No one wants the information that they publish to be used by pedophiles. We have to be vigilant in ensuring that what we use to promote a team or individual is not used for the wrong purposes.

The following guidelines are suggestions for use when generating articles for publication that involve children or when preparing profiles for use on websites.

### **Here are some basic rules we need to follow:**

- Never give out personal information about the child. This includes surname, address, telephone number etc. Consent is required prior to using any personal details for this purpose.
- Photographs that are used in an article should not include any identifying information e.g. Use the first name of a child rather than the full name, use the region where the person comes from and not the school
- Personal information such as hobbies, likes/ dislikes should not be included as these can be used as grooming tools for abuse.
- Be very careful with the information that you share.

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERNET ACCESS AND ACCESSING CHAT ROOMS AS PART OF A PROGRAM**

Certain activities and areas of the Internet require special caution. They can be fun and valuable when used properly, but can be easily abused and misused. These include: sharing personal information with others online, instant messaging, personal profiles, personal websites, pen pal programs, chatting online, registering at sites or for contests, opening attachments to instant messages and e-mails and even searching for sites.

- Paedophiles prey on the new, inexperienced kids online. The more children display cyber-smarts, the less likely they will appeal to a predator online. Before children wander around online unattended, surf with them.
- Paedophiles look for loners. Many parents buy their children a computer because they don't have many real life friends. These kids are easier prey, since it's less likely they'll talk about the overtures to their friends, and they are more susceptible to someone trying to befriend them. They're lonely, and the paedophile poses as a much-needed friend.
- Paedophiles look for kids who are having problems at home. They too are easier prey, since they are looking for a sympathetic ear. The paedophile tries to win the child over by further separating the child from their family, complaining about "parents" generally.
- Make sure children understand that they should never meet anyone in real life that they met online without parents in attendance, and that people online are often not honest about who or what they are.

### **Here are some basic rules we need to follow and teach children to follow:**

- Don't share personal information that would allow a person to find someone offline. Think about that carefully...
  1. Have you shared a full name and city where someone lives? If so, someone can find that person at an online directory if they have a listed telephone number.
  2. Have you registered at a directory that allows people to find you online?
  3. Have you given out information about a school or sports team? Could a virtual Sherlock Homes find that person with the information available about them online? If so, it's time to start deleting that information.
  4. Remember, people are not always who they say they are online
  5. Never arrange a face to face meeting with someone they have met on the Internet.
- Individuals don't have to respond to every message someone sends them.
  1. Just because someone wants to talk to you on the street or a stranger calls

you on the phone, we don't talk to anyone we don't want to talk to.

2. But somehow, online we respond differently. If an individual gets an unsolicited instant message or e-mail from a stranger, they don't have to, and shouldn't, respond.
- Don't register or shop at a site unless you are sure that they are who they say they are.
    1. Make sure you know who you are dealing with. While you might be perfectly happy sharing personal information with the New York Times at their site, you might be less comfortable sharing it with Johnny Con Artist.
    2. Also using a credit card online is very safe, as long as you provide it to a reliable merchant (you wouldn't hand your credit card to any stranger in a mall would you?), and as long as you are using a secure transmission. (This will have an unbroken lock or a key on the lower left-hand corner of your web browser.)
  - Always practice safe computing by using an anti-virus program. Safe computing requires that *all* attachments, not just those received from strangers, should be run through your anti-virus program
  - When searching for a site using a search engine, individuals may find more than they are looking for...
    1. When adults and children alike search for sites using a search engine, because of the way webmasters code information about their sites, they may find many adult-content sites popping up.
    2. As adults we might not like this, but our children should be restricted to [filtered search engines](#) such as [www.yahooligans.com](http://www.yahooligans.com) or [www.lycozone.com](http://www.lycozone.com) or [www.webkeys.com/kidfavourites.htm](http://www.webkeys.com/kidfavourites.htm).
  - When communicating with others online, make sure that individuals are aware of Net etiquette.
    1. Many cyber-stalking incidents and flaming (online fights and harassment) are started inadvertently because the victim didn't know and didn't follow the rules of the chatroom or discussion board.
    2. We should "lurk before we leap." (Lurking is when you listen rather than post in a chat or discussion board.)
    3. Teach individuals to respect others, and to know that the rules that apply to correct behaviour offline apply online too.