Important Information on Cyber Safety for Children

Children and young people in care should be encouraged and supported to participate in positive experiences involving digital media, as long as it is safe to do so. There are a number of strategies that carers can use to help children stay safe online, including modelling appropriate internet usage and being aware of the risks associated to children on social media platforms. Carers can also be active in educating children and young people in their care to engage safe internet behaviour.

Many children and young people use social networking websites to share information about themselves, as well as to communicate with biological family. It is easy to forget that the internet is a public place where information can be accessed easily by unintended viewers or used for unintended purposes. Helping children and young people to be aware of the public nature of the internet can actively help to support internet safety.

Be engaged, open and supportive

- get involved. Share online time with your children as part of family life and continue conversations around social media
- always keep the lines of communication open. Ask about their online experiences and who they are interacting with, while monitoring where possible
- reassure your child that they can always come to you, no matter what. Let them know you will not cut internet access if they report feeling uncomfortable or unsafe when online
- if you notice a change in mood or behaviour, discuss this with your child and consult health professionals if required, as well as discussing with your Case Manager
- let your child know that additional support and resources are available, such as your Case Manager.

Set some rules and boundaries

- set age appropriate rules for devices and online access
- seek your child's input, to help them better understand the risks
- consider creating a family contract as a way to help you agree on the rules and renegotiate as required.

Use the available technology

- get to know the devices you and your children use and set them up for privacy and online safety
- utilise parental controls and monitor screen time
- choose apps and games carefully, considering age ratings, developmental capacity and consumer advice.

Due to legal reasons, information that identifies or is likely to identify a child as connected to the Child Protection system cannot be published. This includes publishing information identifying the child as being in Out-of-Home-Care or the subject of a risk of harm report. As per the ChildStory Factsheet, you do not require consent for kids to appear in a school photo, sports team photos or home video, as long as it's for personal use.

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Cyber Safety Factsheet

Important tips for keeping your child safe online

Children 5-12 years

As children start to navigate the online world and interact with others more independently, they are more likely to be exposed to risks, such as bullying, unwanted contact, sexting or inappropriate content. For children between 5-12 years old, it is important to consider the following strategies to keep them safe:

Supervision and monitoring

- make use of the parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices.
- keep all devices in an area of the home that can be supervised.

Conversations and engagement

- stay engaged with their online activity
- explore together
- build resilience
- encourage respect and empathy when interacting with others
- support and monitor any communication with biological family and discuss with your Case Manager.

Appropriate usage

- consider social media readiness, development and age restrictions on social media platforms (most require users to be 13+)
- model appropriate internet usage.

Protecting themselves and others

- make sure your child knows not to share any personal information about themselves or others online
- only share appropriate photos
- only talk to people online that they know and trust
- be respectful and kind.

For further information or questions specific to any child in your care, please speak to your Case Manager
* Printed 2019 *Information adapted from Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

Helpful resources

Headspace: headspace.org.au
Parentline: parentline.org.au
Kids Helpline: kidshelpline.com.au

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