

Mobile phones

Schools and colleges can make reasonable rules about what students can and cannot bring to school. The use of mobile phones, mp3, iPods and similar devices in class can be disruptive to the learning environment if not being used for educational purposes. Students wishing to use these devices in school for personal reasons should seek permission for special arrangements with school or college staff.

Cyberbullying

ACT Police have been assisting schools to educate students about the criminal offence of cyberbullying. If students use their mobile phones in an inappropriate fashion against others they could be committing a crime. Use of mobile phones can be traced, even if a false name is used.

While schools are making every effort to ensure students understand school policies and the legal implications of cyberbullying, parents should also take responsibility when sending their children to school with a mobile phone.

Ask whether it is necessary for your child to have a mobile phone during school hours. Talk to your child about the use of mobile phones and reinforce the message that sending unsolicited messages and recording incidents at school could result in them being charged with a criminal offence.

Further information can be obtained from the Australian Communications and Media Authority by e-mail at online@acma.gov.au or visit www.cybersmartkids.com.au



Safer mobile phone use

- ✓ Check school guidelines about the use of mobile phones. Keep abreast of school communication for any updated information.
- ✓ Talk to your child regularly about mobile phone use and whether any issues have come up recently in their social networks.
- ✓ Help your child recognise when mobile messaging 'crosses the line' and who they can talk to.
- ✓ Assure your child they can talk to you or their teacher if they see instances of cyberbullying, for example, other students filming an inappropriate incident on their mobiles.
- ✓ Remind your child that cyberbullying can result in severe school sanctions or constitute criminal behaviour.

Who to talk to

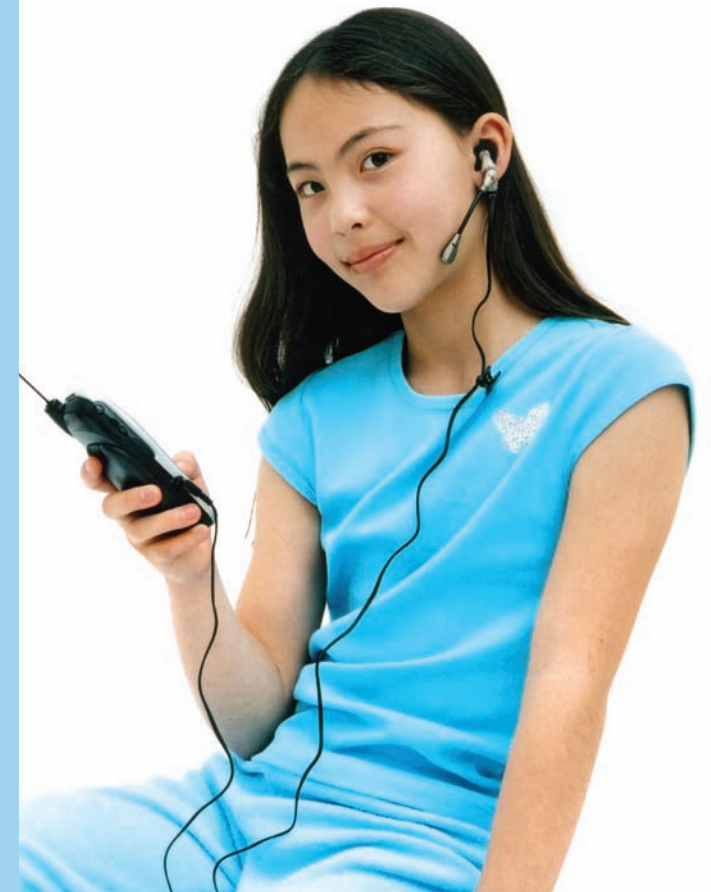
If you have further questions, remember you can always speak to your child's teacher at school, or ACT Policing if there are suspected aspects of criminality. Children can also speak to their school counsellor or pastoral care teacher or contact Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800 (24 hours).

Cybersmart Kids Online

Cybersmart Kids Online, the Australian Communications and Media Authority website at: www.cybersmartkids.com.au will help you and your family to find out how to be cybersmart and use the internet safely. The site is a young person's guide to smart net surfing, chatting and emailing.

Department of Education and Training policies

ACT Department of Education and Training policies on: The Acceptable Use of ICT; The Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones; and Providing Safe Schools are available from the Department website: www.det.act.gov.au.



Keeping Children Safe in Cyberspace

A guide for ACT parents and carers to assist their children to:

- *develop safe information and communications technology skills*
- *balance access to online experiences with opportunities to develop cyberwise skills*
- *use mobile phones and other hand-held devices responsibly*





ACT Public Schools

So much more to offer

Message from the Minister

The ACT Government is committed to providing state of the art information and communication technology in our schools.

The information age and globalisation means our students, more than ever, need to be prepared for an increasingly global workplace where literacy in information and communication technology is a must.

The Government is committing \$20 million to improve ICT in our schools. This state of the art technology will create closer links between parents, children and teachers in the ACT, and throughout the world, and provides opportunities for students to practise their communication and information gathering skills within a secure environment.

Whether it is working with the Internet or communicating by mobile phone, students should feel safe and not be exposed to inappropriate material.

Parents and teachers can help students gain a greater understanding and awareness of safe online behaviours, without students being exposed to the potential hazards of unrestricted Internet access.

The ACT Department of Education and Training has firm policies governing the appropriate use of the Internet and mobile phones within schools. The Department also uses software that filters Internet websites to protect students from inappropriate online content. A list of relevant Department policies and advice on where you can access the information is contained in this brochure.

You will also find helpful advice on how you can help students make smart choices about what they find online and to help students protect themselves while outside the school environment.

Andrew Barr MLA
Minister for Education and Training

Tips for parents and families

Parents and carers can help their children make smart choices about what they find online.

To help your children protect themselves you can:

- ✓ Spend time online with your children and check out sites together.
- ✓ Help your children use the internet as an effective research tool.
- ✓ Encourage your children to be careful about giving out personal details on the internet.
- ✓ Make your child aware of stranger danger, particularly in chat rooms.
- ✓ Talk to your children about their online experiences both good and bad.
- ✓ Teach your children about dealing with disturbing material and leaving sites.
- ✓ Teach your children that information on the web is not always reliable.
- ✓ Encourage children to treat others on the net the same way they would in real life.
- ✓ Know the best ways of avoiding spam and using filters, labels and safe zones.
- ✓ Learn what young people learn – you need to know about chatting, blogging, message boards, Youtube, Facebook and MySpace, for example.



Supervision at home

- ✓ Place your home computer in a public area of your home, perhaps in the room the family spends most time in and not in the child's bedroom.
- ✓ Talk through internet use with your child and set some boundaries for computer use. Maybe the time of day they are allowed on the internet, how long they spend online, and what happens if they don't follow the guidelines.
- ✓ Supervise your child when they are working online and remind them about following the agreed guidelines.
- ✓ Let your child know you are around when they are working online - occasionally look over their shoulder.
- ✓ Stay informed about who your child is communicating with online. Always supervise them when in chatrooms and never allow them to meet up with new online friends without your knowledge.

There can be health benefits too, when children are encouraged to participate in different activities like sports, dancing, even playing outside, rather than spending most of their recreation time on the computer, texting or using other communication technology.

Security

Parents and carers can do a lot to protect their children from inappropriate online material:

- ✓ Download free internet content filters to protect your family online.
- ✓ Ensure your home computer is protected from viruses and spyware.
- ✓ Ensure your firewall is active and install some parent control software. Further information can be found at <http://www.netalert.gov.au>
- ✓ Some sites that can assist in keeping your child safe online include: Netty's World (www.nettysworld.com.au), CyberQuoll (www.cyberquoll.com.au), CyberNetrix (www.cybernetrix.com.au), Wise up to IT (www.wiseuptoit.com.au), Michael Carr-Greg (Psychologist) <http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com.au>