WA Child Safety Services
Creating Safer Communities

ONLINE SAFETY
Parent Guide

INTRODUCTION TO WA CHILD SAFETY SERVICES

WA Child Safety Services (WACSS) is Western Australia's specialist provider of child safety education, training, and resources.

We work with children, young people, parents, educators, and professionals to create safer communities. Our diverse and experienced team collectively brings over 100 years of experience in abuse prevention and child safety.

Our programs are delivered in a clear and non-confronting way using fun and engaging activities and in accordance with children's ages and developmental stages.

We deliver a broad scope of child safety workshops to schools, early learning centres, family services, youth services, sport clubs and other organisations.

Our services range from introductory workshops to two-day courses and all are delivered by experienced and accredited trainers across four child safety priority areas:

Can you or someone you know help us change the lives of children and create safer communities?

WA Child Safety Services is a service arm of the charity, Caring Communities Inc. All donations $2 and over are tax deductible. Thanks to generous volunteer time and low administrative costs, all donations go directly towards providing much-needed services across our state.

Please visit our website or **www.givenow.com.au/wachildsafetyservices** to make a donation.

ONLINE SAFETY IN TODAY'S WORLD

With today's technological advancements, communication and social engagement have evolved. While we have benefited from these advancements, there are some legal, emotional and social issues that we have not dealt with before.

Children and young people are usually at the forefront of technological advances. They often know more than the trusted adults in their lives, however, they are heavily influenced by social media and their online experiences, and are also at most risk of exposure to harm. As adults, we can utilise our life experience and knowledge of safety to assist them in managing the risks whilst maximising the benefits of being online.

Consider using a Technology Agreement with your children. This will establish clear rules, expectations and boundaries along with consequences for misuse of technology. It can be helpful for the trusted adults in children's lives to also complete a Technology Agreement. Doing this together as a family promotes unity and consistency. This ensures everyone in the home (including the adults) are accountable for their use of technology and online behaviour. This is also the time to establish where technology can and cannot go in your home, where it will be charged/ stored overnight and to establish appropriate screen time limits.

!TIP   Plan screen-free time activities such as sport, outdoor play or art!

FREE DOWNLOAD ONLINE

Visit the WACSS website to access a FREE Technology Agreement.
www.wacss.com.au
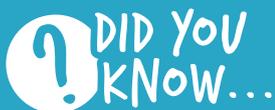
!DID YOU KNOW... Many children and young people express how unhappy they are with their parents' use of technology. Creating a Technology Agreement is a great way to work together, and also be accountable for your own use of technology.

ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

1 BENEFITS OF CREATING A TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

> Having a device is not a right, it's a privilege and it comes with rules and responsibilities. A Technology Agreement will capture the rules and responsibilities for device and internet use in our family.

> Take the time to share with each other what you love doing on your device and online.

> Misuse of technology can have an effect on our physical, mental and emotional health. It is important to establish boundaries for technology use to keep our eyes, body and brain safe and healthy.

2 INCREASING PERSONAL SAFETY ONLINE

> Understand and establish what personal information is 'public' (okay to share) and what is 'private' (not to be shared) online.

> Create usernames and passwords with your child. Reiterate to your child that passwords are not to be shared with anyone, except parents. If they want to change a password they need to do it with you.

> Avoid posting photos or videos of children in uniforms.

> Use the privacy settings available on devices, social media and gaming platforms.

> Avoid accepting 'friend' or 'follower' requests from people you do not know in the real world or have never met.

> Turn off location services on all apps that do not require them.

> Turn off geo-location settings on devices.

> Set clear rules for using private chat (e.g. no private chat, or only with people children know in 'real life').

> Explain how people online do not always tell the truth and may not be who they say they are.

> If your child is gaming, avoid using a headset. This will allow you to hear online conversations. Whilst this may mean your home is a little noisy, it gives you the best opportunity to hear what your child is being exposed to (e.g. swearing, inappropriate conversation, bullying and potential online grooming).

> Explain that you do not take or send private photos or videos to anyone.

> Discuss what your child can do if they see any photos, videos or words they have questions about, or make them feel upset/ uncomfortable/embarrassed/sad/scared/ anxious/ nervous/confused/gross, they can come and speak with you about it.

3

DEVELOPING HEALTHY HABITS FOR DEVICE USE

> Limit the use of technology in bedrooms.

> We suggest removing devices from bedrooms overnight.

> Discuss with your children the importance of having a balance between tech time and 'unplugged time'. Discuss ways they can enjoy time offline (e.g. hang out with friends, play sport, do some physical activity, play outside, create some art).

> Gaming before bedtime is not recommended as the brain is in an elevated state of arousal, making it difficult to fall asleep, stay asleep or achieve the needed quality or quantity of sleep. Gaming is also not recommended before school.

> Ideally children should stop gaming 90 minutes before naptime or bedtime (at least 60 minutes will be helpful).

> Consider scheduling technology-free days for your family.

4

CREATING POSITIVE DIGITAL REPUTATIONS AND DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS

> Understand that everything you post online becomes part of your digital footprint and digital reputation. This information may be used to form an opinion about you now, or in the future. Encourage children to create a positive digital footprint (e.g. everything they post should be true, kind, necessary, helpful and legal).

> Behave online in the same way you would behave offline. Talk about what children can do if anyone bullies them or if they are exposed to inappropriate content.

5

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS

> Model respectful, responsible and moderate use of technology.

> Establish where technology can and cannot go in your home, where it will be stored overnight and consider establishing a schedule for technology use.

> Show your children how to block and report people online. If you don't know how to do this, learn together.

> Explore **www.esafety.gov.au** and **www.kidshelpline.com.au** with your

children. Make sure they know how to use the support functionalities available online.

> Set up your child's device (or any device they have access to), using the free parental controls and restrictions available. Parental control tools can assist you to monitor, restrict and limit what children and young people do and see online. There are many tools available with different functionalities. Parental control tools can be used to assist, but not replace ongoing supervision, education and conversation.

> Be mindful that most devices also give children access to a camera. Australian Federal Police have reported an increase in the amount of youth produced sexual content being shared online by Australian children as young as 4 years of age.

> Play and boredom are as important as they've ever been, but perhaps even more so in our fast-paced, scheduled, and connected lives. Children need to be given the space to use their imagination, be creative, be bored and as parents we don't need to 'fix' the boredom.

> Get involved with your child's online activities. Sitting with them even for a short time will give you an insight into what they are doing, why they like it, what they are learning, who they are interacting with and how they and others are behaving. This will provide you with many teachable moments.

FAMILY TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

WA Child Safety Services encourages parents to use a Technology Agreement with their children to promote safe, respectful and healthy use of technology. The agreement will establish clear rules, expectations and boundaries along with consequences for misuse of technology.

Developing a Technology Agreement together as a family promotes unity, consistency and ensures everyone (including the adults) in the home is accountable for their use of technology and online behaviour. When developing a Technology Agreement it is important to consider and discuss the following information with your family.

Check out our example Technology Agreement on the following page.

Please note this is a sample only. It can be used as a guide. Use what is relevant for your family. It is important to discuss together and tailor an agreement to suit your family.

A downloadable template is available at www.wacss.com.au

FREE DOWNLOAD ONLINE

THE HARRISON FAMILY TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT

CHILD:

I, Mark Harrison agree to:

The following family rules about my device and technology time:

> I can use my device without having to ask permission on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:00pm and Saturdays from 8:00-9:30am.

> I can use my device in the lounge, dining or kitchen, but will not take it into my bedroom.

> I will return my device to our family charging area when my technology time ends.

> I will treat my device with respect and not leave it lying around.

> When I am at school, I will follow the school rules about device use.

> I will not use my device during sleep time, as I know it will affect my sleep.

> I will not use my device to bully, tease, threaten, bribe, embarrass, frighten or humiliate anyone.

Always follow these rules to protect myself while online:

> I will be respectful to others online.

> I will not share any personal information about myself, family or friends online (for example, my full name, address, phone number or school name).

> I will not share my password or pins with anyone except my parent/s.

> I will not change any passwords, pins or change/disable device settings without my parent/s' permission.

> All of my social media accounts will be set to 'private'.

> I will not talk to people I do not know or without my parent/s' permission (including email, private message, friend/follower requests).

> I will only be online friends with and private message people I know in real life.

> I will not meet in person anyone I have only met online. I will tell my parent/s if someone asks me to.

> I will not take or send private photos or videos. If someone sends me a private photo or video I will turn away and tell my parent/s as soon as I can.

> I will check with my parent/s before I subscribe to any site or before I buy anything online (including apps, games, software or make in-app purchases).

> I will ask for help if I am being teased, threatened, bribed, embarrassed, frightened, humiliated and if I feel unsafe or confused by something online. I know I can ask my parent/s for help. I also know I can contact the Kids Helpline or go to the eSafety Commissioner website.

> I will tell my parent/s if I need to block or report someone or something online.

> I will talk to my parent/s if I see, am sent or am shown private photos or videos.

> I will talk to my parent/s if I see any photos, videos or words that I have questions about, or make me feel upset, uncomfortable, embarrassed, sad, scared, anxious, nervous, confused or gross.

PARENTS

We, Natalie and Troy Harrison agree to:

> Be available to talk and answer any questions you have without judgement.

> Respond calmly and help you find a solution if needed.

> Where possible give you a warning before your tech time is finished so you are prepared for it to end.

> Not confiscate your device or remove tech time if you tell us that you have seen photos, videos or words that have upset you or make you uncomfortable.

> Not use devices at the dinner table.

> Not use devices when driving or crossing roads.

> Not share photos of other people online without their consent (permission).

> Be conscious of how much time we spend using technology. If someone feels like a family member is distracted by their device please tell them.

> Help keep you safe and healthy by setting boundaries for technology use and enforcing the consequences we decided upon as a family if the Technology Agreement is broken.

> Help you develop respectful, responsible and healthy habits for device use.

I, Mark Harrison understand if I break the rules of this agreement the consequence will be:

_____

_____

Parent Signature: _____   Parent Signature: _____

Child Signature: _____   Date: _____

PORNOGRAPHY

PRIVATE PHOTOS AND PRIVATE VIDEOS

The internet and portable devices have transformed the way pornography is accessed. It is no longer a matter of 'if' your child will see pornography, but when. Research indicates that children's first exposure to pornography is now in primary school and the age of exposure is getting younger and younger.

Experts across the globe agree that exposure to pornography is a public health crisis. It is believed that pornography exposure is contributing to the staggering statistic that approximately 30% to 60% of child sexual abuse is now committed by children and young people *(Quadara 2014)*. Experts believe this significant increase can be attributed to the easy access of online pornography, which gives children and young people distorted and unhealthy ideas about sexuality and relationships.

In Protective Behaviours we teach children about 'public' and 'private' places, behaviours, information, clothing and parts of the body. This provides you with an excellent introduction and the language to explain pornography to primary school aged children. We suggest using the language 'private photos' and 'private videos'.

Avoid using the words 'rude' and 'bad' when describing private parts of the body or pornography. If a child sees, is sent or is shown pornography we do not want them to think they are rude or bad, as this may discourage them from telling a trusted adult what they have seen.

Children may use the internet to find out more about their own bodies or to search a word they have heard (e.g. sex, boobs, porn). What they find may not be what they are expecting and may be highly graphic, confronting and sometimes upsetting.

It can be helpful to give children a range of 'in the moment' strategies if they do see private photos or videos.

> Turn the device off.
> Turn the device over or close the laptop.
> Close or cover your eyes.
> Look or move away.
> Importantly, do not show friends or siblings.
> Talk with a trusted adult about what you have seen.

IF YOU **SEE** OR **HEAR VIDEOS, PHOTOS OR WORDS** THAT YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT OR MAKE YOU FEEL:

Uncomfortable · EMBARRASSED · Confused · Scared · Nervous · Sad · ANXIOUS · Gross

YOU CAN:

SAY TO YOURSELF "THAT'S NOT FOR ME" · CLOSE YOUR EYES · LOOK AWAY · TURN THE DEVICE OFF

THEN TALK WITH A TRUSTED ADULT OR CONTACT → kidshelpline

wachildsafetyservices.com

PURCHASE VIA WEBSITE

WACSS Posters are available for purchase via www.wacss.com.au

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO PORNOGRAPHY

You may be feeling angry, upset, sad or disappointed. Those are very normal responses. It may be helpful for you to take some time to compose yourself before talking with your child.

1. REASSURE YOUR CHILD

Remain calm when speaking with your child. The way you react can determine how they approach you in the future. This is an opportunity to reinforce the Protective Behaviours theme, 'We can talk with someone about anything, no matter what it is'. Reassure your child that they are not in trouble and you will help them make sense of what they saw.

2. LET YOUR CHILD TELL YOU WHAT THEY SAW

Take some time to give your child the opportunity to tell you about what they saw. It is important to allow your child talk freely before you start asking questions. Remember that your child may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed and it may be upsetting or shocking for you. Try to remain calm and composed while your child shares with you what they saw.

3. ASK QUESTIONS TO GATHER INFORMATION

To get a better understanding of what your child has seen and how you can support them you could ask the following questions:

> When did you first see it?

> Where were you when you saw it? (e.g. bedroom, friend's house)

> Was anyone else with you when you saw it?

> How did it make you feel?

> Do you have any questions about what you saw?

> Have you watched it again? If so, how often?

4. SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

> Remind your child that telling you was the right thing and that they are not in trouble. Explain that they may come across this type of thing again and if they do, it is important to tell you about it.

> Reassure your child that curiosity and questions about bodies and sexuality are normal. Sex is not bad, dirty or wrong.

> It is important that your child understands that pornography is not a real display of sex, love or affection.

> Re-visit the 'in the moment' strategies (see 'Tip' on page 8).

> Create or re-visit your family's Technology Agreement.

FREE DOWNLOAD ONLINE

Visit the WACSS website to access a FREE Technology Agreement.
www.wacss.com.au

!DID YOU KNOW…

Many primary school aged children tell us they have seen pornography online. They want to talk with their parents but say they don't because they are afraid of getting in trouble or having their device confiscated.

!DID YOU KNOW…
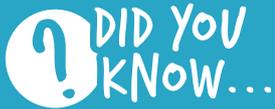
Anecdotally, the average age of first exposure is 8 years old.

8 YEARS OLD

CONVERSATION STARTER

It is important to let your child know that if they ever see any photos, videos or words that they have questions about, or anything that makes them feel upset/uncomfortable/ embarrassed/ sad/scared/ anxious/ nervous/ confused/ gross, they can come and speak with you about it.

If you are concerned about your child's response or feel that your child is developing problematic viewing habits, there may be a need to follow up with professional services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

> Visit echildhood.org

> Contact your local GP to discuss options for additional help.

!TIP Visit the WA Child Safety Services website for further information and resource recommendations.

We understand that talking about pornography can be challenging and it can be difficult to know where to start. We encourage you to attend a **WACSS Let's Talk about Pornography Workshop**. The workshop will provide up-to-date information, practical strategies, resource recommendations and conversation starters to help you talk to children about the reality of pornography.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control tools can assist you to monitor, restrict and limit what your children do and see online. There are many tools available and they all offer different functionalities. Parental control tools can be used to assist, but not replace ongoing supervision, education and conversation.

TIP Visit the WACSS website for a list of parental control tools available in Australia.

TIP Free parental controls can be found on devices, websites and platforms. Check out the videos on the WA Child Safety Services YouTube Channel for how to use these.

WACSS Posters are available for purchase via www.wacss.com.au

PURCHASE VIA WEBSITE

WACSS provides Online Safety in-class student sessions and Parent Workshops.

We encourage you to attend a **WACSS Online Safety Parent Workshop** for more in-depth and up-to-date information and tips.

WA Child Safety Services and Family Zone are working together to create safer communities. Sign up to Family Zone through the WA Child Safety Services website and you will **receive 10% off your charges for 12 months!**

STAY UP TO DATE WITH WACSS

For books and resources, up-to-date information and activity ideas visit the WA Child Safety Services website and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

WA Child Safety Services Website
www.wacss.com.au

WA Child Safety Services on Instagram
www.instagram.com/wa_child_safety_services

WA Child Safety Services on Facebook
www.facebook.com/wachildsafetyservices

WA Child Safety Services on YouTube
Search for 'WA Child Safety Services'

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Australian Office of the eSafety Commissioner   www.esafety.gov.au

Up-to-date resources and information for parents and educators. reporting functions for cyberbullying, image based abuse and child exploitation material in Australia.

iParent portal: **esafety.gov.au/iparent**

Kids Helpline   **1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au**

Free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25

Common Sense Media   **www.commonsensemedia.org**

Up-to-date reviews and information about apps, platforms, games, movies, books and more.

Think U Know (Australia)   **www.thinkuknow.org.au**

Up-to-date information and resources. It's a partnership between the Australian Federal Police, Commonwealth Bank, Microsoft and Datacom.

Netsmartz   **www.netsmartz.org**

Interactive, educational programs designed for children aged 5-17 years, parents/guardians, educators, and law enforcement. Resources include videos, games, activity cards, and presentation..

Media Time Calculator and Family Media Plan   **www.healthychildren.org**

A Media Time Calculator and a personal Family Media Plan which allows you to create a plan specific to your family. Includes activity cards and presentations.

Australian Council on Children & the Media (ACCM)   **www.childrenandmedia.org.au**

Evidence-based reviews, information and advocacy to support healthy media choices for children.

Social Media Safety Centres

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Google, Apple, PlayStation, Xbox and YouTube.

For age and developmentally appropriate sex education visit:

'Talk soon. Talk often.'   **www.healthywa.gov.au**

www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Talk-soon-talk-often

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