

Online safety

We have an expert team to support our students.

Our pastoral care team includes junior and senior deans, specialist guidance counsellors, and youth workers from Kahu Youth and 24-7.



MAC Health Education teacher Carys Overton

In Health Education studies, we emphasise that the online world can be both a rewarding and stressful environment. We promote ways for students to keep themselves safe online, and show them how their parents, friends, and school can help protect them.



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INFORMATION SHEET

What are the risks to young people of being online?

- The internet is a valuable tool for learning, connecting and being entertained, but it also poses safety risks.
- Risks include: online bullying, unwanted contact (catfishing and grooming), body dissatisfaction, disordered eating and depressive symptoms linked to social media use, sexting and nudes, pornography, excessive screentime, and upsetting content.

What we know about online safety

- Netsafe's research has found that nearly 19% of New Zealand teens have experienced an unwanted digital communication that has negatively impacted on their daily activities.
- While the rates of young people sharing nude images of themselves is relatively low, what is more common is the pressure to share these images, with one in five young people having been asked to share such images. (*Netsafe report: 'Teens and Sexting in New Zealand: Prevalence and attitudes', 2017*)
- Parents reported children's exposure to sexually explicit content increased with age; and exposure to sexually explicit content was more common among boys. (*Netsafe report: 'Children's exposure to sexually explicit content: parents' awareness, attitudes and actions, 2018*)
- The 2019/20 New Zealand Health Survey reported that 88% of children aged from under one to 14 exceed the recommended screen time guidelines. Approximately 90% of 10 to 14-year-olds watch screens for more than two hours each day.

INFORMATION SHEET

How we promote online safety at school

- We recognise that technology has a vital role in teaching and learning, and in our daily lives, and must be used effectively and responsibly.
- Without the distraction of a phone, we believe students are better able to engage in their learning.
- Our '[mobile phones policy](#)' bans personal device use at school and is designed to help students focus on their learning rather than being distracted by their devices.
- We want our students to feel safe at school, protected from the harmful effects of cyberbullying, and able to fully engage with their friends without the distraction of cell phones in the playground.
- Prioritising student wellbeing by building a [safe, caring and inclusive environment](#), is central to our approach in preventing and responding to bullying, including online bullying.
- In Health Education studies, we emphasise that the online world can be both a rewarding and very stressful environment. We promote ways for students to keep themselves safe online, and show them how their parents, friends, and school can also help protect them.

Resources for parents

- Netsafe Online Safety Parent toolkit: netsafe.org.nz/parenttoolkit/
- Helping young people exposed to upsetting content: netsafe.org.nz/upsetting-content/
- How to talk to teens about online safety: netsafe.org.nz/engaging-young-people-in-online-safety-discussions/

Tips for parents

Understand: Read about the potential online risks, challenges and sometimes illegal behaviour young people face to understand what may happen.

Learn: Ask your child about what they do, how they use devices and who they talk to learn about their activities. Check in regularly to see what has changed.

Explore: Take the time yourself to explore the sites, apps and technologies your child uses to improve your knowledge and understand their experience.

Agree: Create a family code with your child to agree on what they can do online including sites to visit, appropriate behaviours, privacy settings and limits.

Teach: Recognise each child has unique needs, but some online safety concepts are universal. Start by teaching yours the '[Five tips to help your child thrive](#)'.

Model: Be a good example to your child. Make sure you model the behaviours you want to see your child use online and offline.

Plan: Make a plan so everybody knows what to do if something goes wrong and where you can get advice and support in challenging times.

Source: netsafe.org.nz/online-safety-for-parents/



Our team of guidance counsellors
Michael Multhaup, Victoria Stewart and Holly McDiarmid

How to contact our guidance counsellors

E: dept-guidance@mtaspiring.school.nz

T: 020 404 94623 or 03 443 0496



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