

NEWS RELEASE



The Hon. Graham West MP
Minister for Juvenile Justice
Minister for Youth
Minister for Volunteering
Minister Assisting the Premier
on Veterans' Affairs

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MINISTER RELEASES CYBERBULLYING REPORT

Minister for Youth, Graham West, has today released a Youth Advisory Council report into Cyberbullying.

The result of online consultations with people between the ages of 12 and 21, the Report found that most young people who had experienced cyberbullying were bullied by someone they already knew.

Mr West said the research also suggested that the anonymity of cyberspace emboldens some young people to participate in online bullying activities.

"Cyberbullying, like all bullying, is a serious problem," Mr West said.

"We need to educate young people about the often serious effects of cyberbullying."

Recent research conducted by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre in WA has suggested that 10 – 15 per cent of 10 – 14 year olds have experienced cyberbullying.

"Cyberbullying is the use of information or digital technology such as email, instant messaging, chat rooms or mobile phones to deliberately harass, humiliate, embarrass, target or threaten someone," Mr West said.

"It involves teasing, harassment, 'flaming', spreading rumours, or sending unwanted messages, and like all forms of bullying, can harm a young person's self esteem."

"The report also found that cyberbullying may be more damaging than face-to-face bullying, as the insults or footage can be shared with a wider audience," Mr West said.

President of the NSW Youth Advisory Council, Amanda Scott, said cyberbullying was a contemporary issue, which evolved as quickly as the new technologies that facilitated it.

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth, called on young people who are being bullied or those who witness it to report it to a trusted adult.

"Bullying is a problem we need to tackle as a community. At school, the workplace, home or with friends, bullying should not be tolerated," Ms Firth said.

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Tips for staying safe online include:

- Keep the computer out in the open - Your child might think twice about looking at inappropriate websites and won't be able to chat to their friends all night while you think they are doing their homework.
- Life online works better when people maintain good manners and treat each other as they'd like to be treated - Talk about this with your child and it may lead to a decline in bullying behaviour, not to mention the many disagreements that children have amongst themselves.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about their online experiences, good and bad - This will make it easier for them if they see something inappropriate or are emailed something unsuitable. If they are embarrassed to tell you, persuade them to at least tell a teacher or another trusted adult.

Parents should keep an eye out for the following signs and talk to their child if they see any of these:

- Your child constantly sits on the computer in chat rooms or instant messaging, from straight after school to very late at night.
- Your child begins showing unexplained money or items that come from "a friend you don't know."
- Your child starts to be secretive about what they are doing online – this could include anything from minimising screens as you walk past, to not letting you see their blogs/chat/social media sites.