School Communities Working Together
Fact sheet for parents and carers

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Introduction

The role of schools is to work in partnership with parents to provide an environment that encourages students to connect with each other and their community, so they can succeed and thrive. Parents, teachers and the community all play a role in fostering this environment.

Schools have well established systems which support student wellbeing and address instances of anti-social behaviour such as bullying, threats of physical violence and other offensive behaviours.

Your role in supporting your child

- Be involved in your child's life – dedicate time to really understand your child. Know where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.

- Be cyber-aware:

    – regularly monitor what they are looking at on the internet and on social media sites and do what you can to reduce their exposure to inappropriate content;

    – place the computer or device in a common area of the house, so your child is less likely to try and access inappropriate web sites or use social media sites inappropriately; and

    – consider using content filters to help control what your child can access.

- Encourage open and honest discussion at home – encouraging your child to learn about and understand other points of view is a valuable life skill. If you stop discussion about topics that you are uncomfortable with, for example religion, politics, racism, drugs, extremism or terrorism, your child may find it even more interesting and may try to find information without you knowing. This could lead them to inaccurate information.

- Encourage positive outlets for your child's energies – sports, performing arts, hobbies and organised clubs, all provide a sense of belonging and somewhere to focus their interests, though it may take a few attempts to find the right interest for your child.

- Be a role model – modelling positive, respectful relationships, positive ways to show emotions and how to apply objective thinking skills are valuable life skills for your child.

How you can help your child

You know your child better than anyone else and are in a good position to notice any changes in their behaviour. If their behaviour changes significantly, try to find out what is happening in their lives. There are many reasons for a change in behaviour, so don't jump to conclusions.

The best way to support your child is to maintain open, non-judgemental communication with them. By keeping a positive relationship you may be in a position to help them if they want to talk about their problems. Listen to their concerns and try to understand their perspective.

Even if you disagree with what they are saying, it is important to find some way to let them know they are accepted and that you are there to help them.

What to do if you are concerned for your child

If you do have concerns that your child is involved in or supporting extremist behaviour there are a number of options for seeking advice. You may like to talk to someone from your child's school such as the Principal, your child's Year Advisor, a teacher, or a trusted staff member.

You may wish to talk to your child yourself, or ask a close friend or family member to do so. Alternatively, there are government assistance and advice lines and websites. Some are listed below.

Remember

As your child grows, they will be exploring their own values and beliefs. They may search for and push the boundaries of acceptable, responsible behaviour during this process.

Cyber Safety

- Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner – https://esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/games-apps-and-social-networking
- ThinkUKnow – internet safety education site – http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/

If you are concerned that a person in your community is showing possible signs of terrorism, you should call the National Security Hotline - 1800 123 400 or email hotline@nationalsecurity.gov.au

Resources

- **000** (triple zero) if you feel unsafe or in danger
- **1800 RESPECT** – http://www.1800respect.org.au
- Domestic violence line **(24h) 1800 65 64 63**
- Lifeline – T: **13 11 14** – http://www.lifeline.org.au
- Black Dog Institute – http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- Secure NSW – http://www.secure.nsw.gov.au
- Living Safe Together – http://www.livingsafetogether.gov.au
- Multicultural NSW – http://www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au
- Australian Multicultural Foundation – http://www.amf.net.au/
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network – http://www.myan.org.au/

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