

ATHLETICS TASMANIA

Position Paper on Cyber Safety and Cyber Bullying

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is a government agency with wide ranging responsibilities including regulation of the internet.

Cyber Safety

Central to its awareness programs on the safe use of the internet is an excellent cyber safety specific website: www.cybersmart.gov.au

It is strongly recommended for viewing by anyone using social network sites as a communications tool. While most schools provide instruction to students on the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet, and particularly social network sites such as *Facebook*, it is suggested that clubs and coaches draw the attention of their athletes to the site and particularly the section devoted to 'teens'. There is also a section for adults that is also recommended to club administrators and coaches.

Key safety tips are:

- **Keep your personal details private:** use an appropriate handle or username instead of your real name. If you are unsure, don't give out your name, address, phone number or any other personal details over the internet.
- **Don't share** your username or password with anyone.
- **Think** before you hit send or post. Once something is posted, it can be online forever.
- **Don't post** anything you don't want others to know—or that you wouldn't say to them face to face. Respect your friends too—that 'funny' photo of them at a party might not be so funny for them, and they might not be very happy if you post it up for everyone in the world to see. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- **Remember** that private images and videos you send to friends or post on a social networking site may be easily passed on to others and uploaded to public sites. This can include pictures that may only be intended for your close friends or your boyfriend/girlfriend. Once they're up, it's almost impossible to remove them completely.
- **Respect** other people's content and be aware that if you post or share their content it might breach copyright laws. For example, a photo that your friend took is their property, not yours. You can only post it online if you have their permission.
- **Read the terms and conditions of any photo or content sharing sites.** Some sites require you to license the material to the site, which might mean that you lose control over your content.

Keeping safe on social networking sites includes :

- No surname
- No mobile or landline phone numbers
- Don't befriend randoms
- Set your site to private
- Remove flirty nicknames
- Remove flirty photos

Internet users should be aware that identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the world. Names and addresses obtained from the internet can be used to create false credit cards and drivers licences.

There is also a growing practice for potential employers, real estate agents who are undertaking character checks on lease applicants, and even university scholarship offices to research applicants on the internet. Care therefore needs to be taken on the type of photographs posted, the types of names used for addresses e.g. hotmail address, and personal lists of interests.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying has received a significant amount of recent media attention. Such bullying usually takes place through e-mail, texting, msn messaging and social networking sites.

Examples of cyber bullying include:

- Spreading rumours online
- Sending threatening emails, text messages or comments to another person
- Tricking someone into revealing private or embarrassing information and sending it to others
- Breaking into someone's email or social media account and sending false messages to others while posing as this person
- Hiding or changing identity and sending messages which tease, humiliate, threaten, punish, or harass another person
- Creating web pages to make fun of another person.

Serious offences of cyber bullying can be dealt with under either criminal law or defamation law. Any threat, even if only a joke, made through any of the mediums mentioned above is illegal under the Telecommunications Act and can be prosecuted under criminal law. Any acts of defamation are not a police matter but can be pursued as a civil matter. In both cases the offended party should block the culprit and collect evidence, particularly if it is intended to report the offence.

Younger people experiencing bullying should:

- Talk to your parents or someone else you trust such as your coach, about what is going on; don't try to deal with the situation on your own
- Print or save all emails, text messages, or chat conversations where the bully interacts with you
- Report bullying to your parents, coach, school teacher, Internet Service Provider (ISP), or police if it continues.
- Use privacy options on *Facebook* and *My Space*
- Change your mobile number, and block your number ID in future to prevent it being recorded when making calls with general phone use
- Change your User ID for instant messaging
- Don't respond; responding can encourage and aggravate the bullying.

The internet is wonderful communications and information tool when used correctly and safely. The key message is simply the need to take care with how you use it.

Prepared for Athletics Tasmania by Board Member, Wayne Mason – August 2011

Following the attendance of AT Representatives at Sport and Recreation Tasmania's SSO Forum on Cybersafety in today's society on 18 April 2011