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Information Technology Services

Information and Cybersecurity Awareness

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For the parents – how to pass on the culture of digital citizenship to your kids

“Small actions, big difference – welcome to the digital neighbourhood”

‘Digital technology has already changed the world, and as more and more children go online around the world, it is increasingly changing childhood’.

(UNICEF – The State of the World’s Children 2017)

Introduction

Children grow up with computing technology today. This comes with many benefits, but also with risks. Just think of cyberbullying and the effect it can have on a vulnerable kid. Parents should not just assume that their kids will know how to:

- protect themselves against people using the Internet as a platform to harm them;
- behave lawfully – for example, not to illegally download or copy other people’s work, access illegal material (e.g. pornography), or make statements that could be classified as hate speech; and
- protect their own privacy and that of others.



How to protect your children

- **Communicate:** Communicate with your children – not so much on which apps are good or bad, as on good behaviour and values. The lack of a physical presence creates a sense of anonymity, and kids can easily fall for the temptation to act in ways that they would never have done in the real world.
- **Respect:** Encourage your kids to treat online friends with as much respect as those they meet face to face. Part of this is not creating or forwarding nasty or humiliating stories or photos about others.
- **Trust:** Make sure your children understand that strangers should not be trusted. A stranger may not be who they say they are, nor look like their photo, and may not have their best interest in mind. Talk to them about their online friends, how they became friends and what they are discussing online.
- **Privacy:** Make sure your kids understand that once they have posted something online they have no further control over it. They cannot control who sees it, where it may be forwarded to, what another person may do with it, and they cannot erase it. Teach them not to share personal information, such as their home and email addresses, cellphone numbers and passwords, indiscriminately online.

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