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Berwick Grammar School



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Guidelines for Child Safety for Teaching Staff during Distance Learning

As educational professionals, we need to be mindful that moving to online/distance learning approach for Term 2 has the capacity to exacerbate existing child safety issues whilst also creating potential new issues. All staff need to be reminded that our existing child safety obligations continue to apply, including duty of care, mandatory reporting requirements, acceptable use of communications and compliance obligations. The current school policies on these aspects can be found on Teacher Kiosk under Links – School Policies.

Some of the key risks include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining professional boundaries with students while engaging with them online
- Students experiencing heightened levels of stress, isolation and anxiety as a result of social distancing requirements and the perceived impact on their studies;
- Students suffering abuse or being exposed to violence at home;
- Student-on-student abuse including cyberbullying, image based sexual abuse and other types of inappropriate online behaviour both on school platforms and social media;
- Online abuse as students explore new forms of social media and online networks;
- Outsiders gaining access to online classrooms or materials;
- Breaches of student privacy and confidentiality;
- Discrimination risks as schools need to continue to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, learning disabilities or other vulnerabilities.

Key considerations

To maintain a child safe remote learning environment, we ask that educational professionals consider the following:

1. Anticipate and understand risks

Teachers could be utilising online platforms that are new and unfamiliar. It is important that we undertake a thorough risk analysis of the platforms being used by teachers and what moving to remote learning means with respect to a risk profile for various platforms being used. Our ICT Department has conducted a Risk Assessment associated with a number of apps and also Microsoft Teams.

Set clear expectations of student behaviour

Teachers are referred to the **Continuity of Learning** document sent out at the end of Term 1 and the email message from The Principal dated Friday, 20 March (some of which is included below) Schools need to set clear expectations of behaviour with staff members, students and parents.

- At St Margaret's and Berwick Grammar School the wellbeing and safety of our students, staff and community is at the heart of our commitment to educate for CHARACTER, CURIOSITY, COURAGE and RESPECT.
- We respect and acknowledge that the online learning environment will be an extension of the face-to-face environment and that all policies relating to Child Safety are still in place regarding our interactions with our students. This includes the use of video-conferencing and email communication.

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- The connection and relationship between teacher and student is at the heart of our way of educating young people for life and it should be our aspiration to replicate this as authentically as possible. Following are some general guidelines to provide learning that keeps our students confident, connected and engaged which we think will enable us to maintain the highest of professional standards and our duty of care.
- We would ask that as a general rule teaching staff conduct their engagement and communication with students and families during the work hours of 8.30am-3.00pm. Try and refrain from emailing at night.
- If teachers are conducting video conferencing we would ask that staff wear neat attire. Students will be asked to wear School or Sports Uniform to maintain normality and structure in their daily lives.
- Online video-conferencing should, where possible, occur in communal residential areas and not in e.g. bedrooms. Students under the age of 11 need a parent with them if staff conduct a video-conference.

Continue child safety awareness

It remains important, if not more important, for schools to be educating staff members on child safety. A copy of the Child Safety briefing video (Child Safe Presentation) is available online in Teacher Kiosk – Links – School Policies. Teachers (especially those new to the school in 2020) should watch this video during this term.

2. Provide training or information to students

The school should be reminding our students on how to stay safe online. For older students, this should include use of social media, apps and online games and guide them through privacy and safety features.

3. Monitor online activity

Staff are asked to report any inappropriate content or online behaviour for further investigation. Initially this should be reported to the House Leader and Heads of Wellbeing disseminated accordingly from here.

4. Comply with mandatory reporting requirements

Staff members are reminded that their usual reporting obligations still apply and to be mindful of behaviours that could be indicators of situations of immediate risk to our students.

Reference: Irvine-So, Rose & Yang Tips for creating a Child Safe Remote Learning Environment

Responsibility

Vice Principal

Location

These guidelines are published on Teacher Kiosk

Review

Triennially or as circumstances dictate.

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Reviewed and Updated:

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