

17 September 2020

Attention all Parents and Carers

Gloucester High School has recently been made aware of online bullying targeting students of our school. An Instagram account was set up and anonymous offensive messages were sent and posted on a story board. This account was initially established last Wednesday night, 9 September. This was reported and removed by a concerned parent. Since then, there has been attempts to set up a similar account using the Gloucester High School's name and logo. This matter was referred to the Social Media Unit of the Department of Education, the e-Safety Commissioners Office and Gloucester Police. This type of online offence has large implications for our students. Parents and carers are encouraged to monitor your children and their online behaviours and report any online offences directly to police if of a serious nature.

A guide to online bullying for parents and carers: Online bullying can have a devastating impact on young people, whose online life is a key part of their identity and how they interact socially. Cyberbullying behaviour takes many forms, such as sending abusive messages, hurtful images or videos, nasty online gossip, excluding or humiliating others, or creating fake accounts in someone's name to trick or humiliate them. Targeted advice is also available for **kids, young people** or **adults** who may be experiencing online abuse.

I think my child is being bullied: Your child may not tell you if they are experiencing bullying behaviour online because of a fear it might make things worse for them or they may lose access to their devices and the internet.

Signs to watch for:

- changes in personality, such as becoming more withdrawn, anxious, sad or angry
- appearing more lonely or distressed
- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- a decline in their school work
- changes in their sleep patterns
- avoidance of school or clubs
- a decline in their physical health
- becoming secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
- Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone

Helpful Websites and links:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/big-issues/cyberbullying> (This site has useful information to support you and your children.)

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-09/English%20-%20Parents%20guide.pdf> (A guide for parents and carers. It also contains links to supports such as Kids Helpline, eHeadspace and Parentline.)

Please ensure you report and act if your child does relay or display any serious impacts from online interactions.

Yours sincerely

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Care Achievement Respect Effort Responsibility

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