3rd August 2015

Dear Archbishops and Bishops,

RE: CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY
13 September 2015

(Held at the end of Child Protection Week 6-12 September)

The 2015 National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) Child Protection Week campaign continues to stress the importance of primary prevention to reduce child abuse and neglect in Australia. The theme this year is:

Be Someone Who Listens To Children

So how do we, the Catholic Church, play our part today in creating safe and supportive environments where we listen to children and work to ensure they are protected from harm?

This question is commonly echoed today by Catholic people who are angry and ashamed at our Church. This question is also asked by survivors who want to be reassured that children of today and tomorrow are protected in our churches, schools and Catholic agencies and will not suffer as they did.

Child Protection Week provides a wonderful opportunity to share the policies, procedures and preventative strategies your diocese, parish, school, or church agency has in place for the protection of children and young people.

This office proposes that you raise awareness of your local diocesan policies, procedures, initiatives and recent training in this important area, and publicise them widely through the pulpit, on noticeboards, in bulletins, newsletters and websites.

Additionally, please find attached some resources that you may also choose to use during Child Protection Week or on Child Protection Sunday. These can be accessed in their entirety at Child Protection Sunday 2015 Resources. This is a link to a drop box whereby you only have to Ctrl + Click on the link. This will take you to dropbox.com and our folder. You can then download the files. This is an external provider but you do not need to join the site in order to access the resources. This link can be copied and pasted to any correspondence.

Alternatively the following have been attached with this letter:

1. Suggested Prayers of the Faithful for Sunday 13 September

2. Background notes and possible homily resource for Sunday 13 September

3. Prayer for the Healing of Victims of abuse

4. Newsletter abstract


A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & Catholic Religious Australia.
The child protection posters and brochures for display in Churches, schools and other places of ministry are available either on the NAPCAN website, http://napcan.org.au/resource-hub/ or in Child Protection Sunday 2015 Resources (dropbox). These include:

Brochures:
- Encouraging a child's right to speak and be heard (NAPCAN)
- Listening to Children (NAPCAN)
- Listening to Young People (NAPCAN)

Posters:
- a. Be someone who Listens to Children (NAPCAN)
- b. You can make a difference start a Conversation (NAPCAN)
- c. Protecting children is everyone’s business (NAPCAN)
- d. Colouring Page I Like it when ..... listens to me(NAPCAN)

You may choose to print some of these or you may make them available on your diocesan or parish websites. Alternatively, you may choose to provide links in your newsletters or websites.

We hope that this letter and these materials will assist you in promoting Child Protection Sunday in your diocese and encourage everyone to ‘Play their part, and be someone who listens to children’.

The resources are not being sent by regular post but distributed electronically with your support. A similar letter will be emailed to Congregational Leaders and Catholic Education Offices.

Please feel free to contact the National Office for Professional Standards on (02) 9669 6218 with any queries and for any assistance.

With best wishes,

Mrs Narelle McMahon and Mr Tom Bagot
National Protection and Prevention Officers

narelle@ncps.org.au    thomas@ncps.org.au

A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & Catholic Religious Australia.
Newsletter Abstract

Child Protection Sunday

In the context of Child Protection Sunday we are provided with an opportunity to reflect on the words of Pope Francis who in a letter wrote on 2 February 2015 to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and Superiors of Religious Institutes he stated that “Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home.”

What part do we play in this ‘shared responsibility’ of working to ensure the Church is a safe and secure community? In the Australian context through Child Protection Week and in particular this Sunday we are asked to be someone who listens to children, someone who will start a conversation with children and if needed, be that someone whom children will turn to when in need.

Here at ...... Parish we can see evidence of our church being a safe and secure home through ......
Prayers of the Faithful - Child Protection Sunday (13 September 2015)

1. For the Church leaders, especially Pope Francis, Bishop .......... and Leaders of Religious Congregations and all entrusted with the care of the Church, that they will continue to promote the safety of minors and vulnerable adults as a priority.

   Let us pray to the Lord

2. That true and lasting peace, reconciliation and harmony will come to all whose lives have been traumatised through abuse.

   Let us pray to the Lord

3. For those affected by abuse in anyway, that they may have the courage to tell their story and to reach for healing.

   Let us pray to the Lord

4. For Parents, mentors, teachers, coaches and all who work with children and young people, that they may look after them with the watchful eye of the shepherd.

   Let us pray to the Lord

5. For the strength to stand up for victims, the humility to understand the wrongs of the past, the patience to stop and listen to children and the vulnerable and the greatness of heart that continues to grow out of this process.

   Let us pray to the Lord

6. For the Children in our parishes, may we all work together to ensure the happiness and confidence of every child and create an environment of safety and protection where children may flourish.

   Let us pray to the Lord

7. That we as members of the body of Christ are all able to protect the dignity of all human life.

   Let us pray to the Lord.

_A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Catholic Religious Australia_
Parents’ guide to online safety

Practical, issue-focused information and advice for parents of children of all ages.
Cybersmart is a national cybersafety education program managed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as part of the Australian Government's commitment to cybersafety. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of children, young people, parents and teachers.
Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group. Bullying is repeated behaviour with the intent to harm others. Behaviour may include:

+ Abusive texts and emails
+ Posting unkind or threatening messages, videos or images on social media websites
+ Imitating or excluding others online
+ Inappropriate image tagging

For many teenagers, their online life is an important part of their social identity. Many young people fear that parents might take away their devices and refuse access to the internet and so do not report cyberbullying to their parents. Teenagers are also often concerned that parents' actions will make cyberbullying issues worse, so it is important to remain calm and supportive.

Trolling is when a user intentionally causes distress by posting inflammatory comments online.

Trolling differs from cyberbullying in that trolls aim to gain attention and power through disruption of conversation by encouraging a defensive reaction from those they attack. Cyberbullying usually focuses less on the reaction of the victim, and more on the feelings and authority of the bully. Cyberbullying is usually repeated behaviour, while trolling can be one-off.

WHAT CAN I DO? As a parent, you can help your child and encourage them to take control of the issue.

+ Talk to them about cyberbullying before it happens. Work out strategies to address any potential issues and reassure your child that you will be there to support them.
+ Advise your child not to reply to any messages from a bully. Often if bullies don't receive a response they will give up.
+ Learn how to block a bully so they are no longer able to make contact.
+ Keep a record of harassing messages in case authorities become involved. Put them somewhere your child won't continue to see them.
+ Contact the website administrator or use the reporting function to ask for content to be removed or to report harassment.
+ Talk to your child's school if cyberbullying involves another student. The school should have a policy in place to help manage the issue.
+ Remember that if your child has been involved in cyberbullying and seems distressed or shows changes in behaviour or mood it may be advisable to seek professional support, including through the Cybersmart Online Helpline at cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx
Social networking describes a variety of services like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, World of Warcraft, Moshi Monsters, Twitter, Skype, Snapchat, Minecraft and many others.

All of these services enable direct interaction between individuals. Users can post information about themselves, display photos, tell people what they've been up to, chat and play games. Social networking forms a part of the social identity of many teenagers.

**GROOMING**

Online grooming is the illegal act of adults making contact with a child online for the purpose of establishing a sexual relationship. Often this will be via a social networking site, but it may also be through other online services.

**WHAT CAN I DO?** As a parent, you can help your child have positive experiences on social networking sites.

- Stay involved in your child’s use of new technology. Set up your own account and learn about privacy settings so you can understand how you can best protect your child. It can be fun for you too!
- Check the age restrictions for the social networking service or game. Some social networking sites (such as Club Penguin) are created especially for children under the age of 13, but most mainstream sites like Facebook, Instagram and others require the user to be 13 or older.
- Advise children to set their accounts to private so that only people they want to see it can view their information.
- Encourage children to think before they put anything online. Information posted online can be difficult or impossible to remove. An inappropriate image posted today can have a long term impact on their digital reputation.
- Show them how to set up location services on their phone so they are not inadvertently broadcasting their location.
- Remind children to be careful when making new friends online; people may not be who they say they are. Never arrange to meet an online friend unless a trusted adult is with them.
- Report any abuse or inappropriate content to the social networking site and show children how to do this too.
- Learn how to keep a copy of online conversations and how to block people prior to an issue occurring.

For more information on managing your children’s access to particular social networking sites, visit cybersmart.gov.au/parents.aspx
Sexting is the sending of provocative or sexual photos, messages, or videos, generally using a mobile phone or webcam. It can also include posting this type of material online. Young people often consider sexting as a way of connecting in a relationship.

While sharing suggestive images or text messages may seem like innocent flirting or fun, sexting can have serious social and legal consequences. To help protect their reputation, young people need to consider what they share online, and how they handle messages and images sent to them by others.

In most instances of sexting, young people willingly share naked photos of themselves. However, sexting can also happen in response to peer pressure. Accidents can also occur; for example, the sender or receiver of sexts may have their phone stolen by someone who decides to publish the images online.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

+ Talk to your child about sexting to prevent any issues from arising. Make sure they are well aware of the risks that may occur if their images were to be spread beyond the person they intended them for.
+ Remind your child about the social and legal consequences of sexting. If anyone in the photo or video is under 18, they may be committing a crime if they send, receive or forward messages.
+ If your child has been involved in sexting, remember to stay calm and be reasonable about the consequences. Sexting is not uncommon behaviour and your child is not alone in being negatively impacted. Rather than adding to the distress, focus on finding a solution for your child.
+ Try to get the image/video removed from all locations to the greatest extent possible. If sexting content is posted online, report it to the website administrator.
+ Seek help from the school if necessary. Ask them to help track who might have the image or video and where it might be posted. Ask them to provide support to your child and others involved.
+ Ensure that your child is supported if they have been negatively impacted by sexting. Their friends are critical so try to help them stay connected to them for support, both online and offline.
Mobile phones are a great way for children and teenagers to stay in touch with their parents, family and friends and provide access to fun and functional resources like games, the internet, music, apps and more from anywhere at any time.

Many young people would never be without their mobile phone, and a mobile phone provides you with immediate access to your children. However, the fact that they are 24/7 and you can’t always be there to supervise means there are potential risks. These can include high or unexpected bill costs, cyberbullying, sexting, broadcasting their location to unintended others through ‘checking in’ and access to inappropriate material.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

+ If you think your child needs a mobile phone, consider purchasing a phone that is not internet enabled. Smartphones come with features you may not yet want your child to have such as unsupervised internet access, a camera, and a wide variety of online games and apps.
+ Stay involved with your child’s use of their mobile phone. If you don’t have a good understanding of how their phone works and what they use it for, ask them to show you.
+ Help your child to understand that they should treat their phone like a wallet, and that every text message, phone call or download costs money.
+ Let your child know that it’s ok to tell you if they come across something that worries them, and that their phone won’t be taken off them if they report something to you.
+ Investigate phone plans and pre-paid contracts. Decide what your child needs from their mobile phone so you are well-educated on options before you approach a provider.
+ Check automatic download settings and in-app purchase settings on your child’s mobile phone, as these can incur extra costs or use up credit quickly.
+ Consider keeping credit card details away from your children so music and apps cannot be purchased without your knowledge. If you have your credit card details stored on an online account, you may choose to keep the password to this account private.
Offensive or Illegal Content

Children and young people may not deliberately seek out inappropriate content. Children can inadvertently access disturbing or illegal content while undertaking online searches or by clicking on unknown links.

Offensive or illegal content may include topics, images or other information that are prohibited in Australia or could be damaging to young people online. This is content that may:

- include footage of real or simulated violence, criminal activity or accidents, promote extreme political or religious views or be sexually explicit and can include illegal images of child sexual abuse
- promote hate towards individuals or groups on the basis of race, religion, sexual preference or other social/cultural factors, instruct or promote crime, violence or unsafe behaviour, like bomb or weapon making, anorexia, drug use, gaining unauthorised access to computers, fraud or terrorist activities

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Be aware of how your child uses the internet and explore it with them. Discuss the kinds of sites that are ok to explore and those that are not.
- Consider using parental controls such as filters to help manage your child’s online access.
- Remind your child not to open spam email or click on pop ups, prize offers or unfamiliar hyperlinks in websites.
- Help your child use search engines to locate websites. Consider developing a list of favourites for younger children. Enable safe search options.
- Reassure your child that access to the internet will not be denied if they report seeing inappropriate content to you.
- Remind them not to respond if they are sent something inappropriate and that they should leave a website immediately if they feel uncomfortable or worried.
- Report content that you think may be prohibited to the ACMA’s online hotline: acma.gov.au/hotline
How much is too much?

Your child may be spending too much time online if their online behaviour is having a negative impact on other aspects of their life.

To many parents it can seem as though children and young people are constantly online. Often they are multitasking; for example downloading and listening to music while studying and chatting with friends or sending messages on their mobile phones.

The number of hours children and young people spend online can vary significantly. There is no guideline for the 'right' amount of time for children to spend online, however if their online behaviour appears to impact negatively on their behaviour or wellbeing, or that of the family, it may be time to discuss expectations and establish time limits.

WHAT CAN I DO?

+ The longer you wait to address the issue, the more difficult it can be to overcome. So if you see an emerging problem arising from excessive use, act on it right away.
+ Talk to your child about the concerns you have and monitor what games, apps and devices are bought or used by your child.
+ You may like to install a filter on the laptop or computer your child is using which can be adjusted to limit the amount of time an internet connection will be available on that device.
+ Consider implementing family agreements about the amount of time your children can spend online. You might like to have a rule where the 'wifi password of the day' is only given once all homework/chores/family time is done. A similar approach can be used to limit access to devices.
+ If your child seems particularly anxious or irritable, or you notice them seeming isolated from friends or other activities, there may be an underlying mental health issue. Consider getting help from school counsellors or your GP who can refer your child to a professional psychologist.
Help and Resources

Check out the following support services and resources to help you keep your family safe online.

+ The Cybersmart website contains information and related links to support parents in keeping kids safe online. Resources include practical, action focussed advice, videos, games, support, and research-based information, and everything is free of charge. Visit cybersmart.gov.au

+ Cybersmart Outreach offers free, school based presentations to keep parents, students and teachers up-to-date with cybersafety issues. These sessions are informative, non-technical and available to all schools. Ask your child’s school if they have registered to host a presentation. Visit cybersmart.gov.au/outreach.aspx

+ School support - Schools may have detailed policies and procedures in place to help support children online, including how to manage issues like cyberbullying, sexting and other online concerns. For more information, contact your child’s school.

+ Counselling - If you suspect or know that a child is being negatively impacted by things happening to them online, consider seeking professional support for them including through the Cybersmart Online Helpline, provided by Kids Helpline. The service provides free, confidential online counselling for children and young people. Visit cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx

+ The Department of Communications’ Easy Guide to Socialising Online, provides information on the safe use of social networking sites, games and search engines. Visit communications.gov.au/easyguide
Cybersmart, through Kids Helpline, also provides young people experiencing problems online with free and private web chat counselling.


1800 55 1800

All of Cybersmart's information, games, videos and teacher resources are available free-of-charge from cybersmart.gov.au

You can also stay up-to-date with the latest cybersafety news, advice and resources on our social media channels:

Social

acma.gov.au/Cybersmartblog
facebook.com/cybersmartcloud
@CybersmartACMA
ACMACybersmart

Contact us

cybersmart@acma.gov.au

1800 880 176

cyber(smart:)