

TEACHERS – Maintaining a Child Safe working environment for your online student learners

If you have a child safety concern for reasons of sexual abuse, neglect, family and domestic violence, emotional or physical abuse, please follow the CECWA Child Safety Procedures and Guidelines

- Contact your principal to consult about the matter as per [Child Safety Procedures and Guidelines](#)
- Your Principal or you may consider contacting the child safe team if you are still unclear. The child safe team will be available during this time:
 - Team Leader: Tim Wong – ph: 6380 5134 or 0439 905 102
tim.wong@cewa.edu.au
 - Consultant: Justine O'Malley - ph: 6380 5197
justine.omalley@cewa.edu.au
 - Consultant: Samantha Rowe – ph: 6380 5246
samantha.rowe@cewa.edu.au
- If you are concerned about a child for reasons of neglect, family and domestic violence, emotional or physical abuse please [LODGE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN REFERRAL](#) with the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support
- If you form a belief that sexual abuse has occurred lodge a [MANDATORY REPORT](#)

GUIDELINES

Under the CEWA Child Safe Framework there are three key practices to follow:

Situational Prevention – through our behaviour and culture this practice aims to mitigate situations that present risk for our students

- Only the platforms approved by CEWA (TEAMS, SEQTA, school email, etc) should be used to communicate with students and parents. As per the code of conduct, teachers should be transparent and accountable in all electronic online communication. Phone calls would only be made in exceptional circumstances – decisions around this should fall to those in Pastoral Care and Leadership. If a student is in distress, then there would be a referral to your school's mental health professional, pastoral care and leadership.
- Consider your workspace:
 - Be conscious of what is in view if you are using video, just as you would in your classroom, and that you are familiar with how to blur your background on TEAMS.
 - Remember if your space is shared, that family or housemates are aware when you are engaged with students and respect your workspace.
- Interacting online:

- If conferencing online, audio rather than video should be preferred, with opportunities for staff and students to use screen capture to illustrate learning.
 - Individual interactions should be kept to a minimum. As much as possible limit interactions to groups as you would if you were physically at school. Such interactions must be through communication channels such as school email that encourage natural surveillance.
- Present yourself as you would at work. Even though you may be in the comfort of your own home you are still required to be professional.
 - Be aware that some of the features available to students may be to record your content and so you must ensure you are continuing to adhere to your Code of Conduct in all that you do and say to your students.
 - As the online environment will now be the primary source of communication there is a potential for cyber issues to increase. Additional resources are available from the eSafety Commissioner's website on how to manage these types of issues.

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-keeping-schools-and-learning-safe-online>

- Begin your online classroom with a reminder about online etiquette, your school's ICT policy or have your class work on an agreement for behaviour just as you would within your physical classrooms
- Model healthy online practices including using positively framed and supportive language in group meetings and having regular breaks from the screen

Extended Guardianship – it is our collective responsibility to support an environment that is engaging, supportive and safe

- There may be some students who feel brave to share more information than they normally would now that they are behind the computer screen. Be prepared and aware as normal for your teaching practice, to recognise and respond to signs and disclosures of abuse.
- Remember, for many students this may be a stressful time. Regular classroom activities and communications can assist in creating a safe and consistent environment for them
 - Not all students will be isolating within a safe environment and you must consider your role as a teacher within this space. If you have concerns regarding any students, your responsibilities as a staff member are unchanged and you are still required to consult with your Principal or Line Manager.
- Ensure students are aware of and are repeatedly reminded of how to access help if they need to raise any concerns. This would be through usual communication pathways such as school email, etc.

Healthy and Respectful Relationships – modelling healthy behaviours equips our students with the understanding of how they should be treated.

- Ensure you maintain appropriate professional boundaries, including times during which you will be available and respond to students and times during which you will be unavailable.
- Remember to model expected behaviour online
 - If you expect your students to give you their full attention during lesson times, it is important you set up your workspace so that you can do the same.
 - Remind students of their student code of conduct. Remind them not to type, say or do anything online that wouldn't be acceptable at school.
 - Be aware that your personal interactions are being streamed to the homes of your students and potentially viewed not just by your students but their families too.
- Current circumstances are not just about physical health, there are social and emotional impacts as well. Students may be feeling isolated or anxious, or observing family members in distressed states. Ensure students know that they can still contact teachers and other support people at your school. Provide contact details through approved communication channels.
- Remember to maintain your communication with your students' parents, don't assume they are always aware of what is happening in your online classroom, consider the fact that they may have multiple children working on multiples devices whilst managing their own working environment as we can appreciate you may too.

Remember to model the Code of Conduct for other staff, parents and students to ensure we create a culture where our students are heard, are safe and can thrive.