The internet and social media offer a great deal of possibilities for education and entertainment, however there are a range of dangers that we need to be actively working to mitigate against for our children.

**At School – Teach them well**
Green Point Christian College will be undertaking a Digital Discipleship and Citizenship Program for students in Year 7 and refresher courses for students in higher years at the commencement of the school year. It aims to teach students how to use technology in a safe and responsible way as citizens in today’s digital society and from within the framework of a Christian worldview. Areas focused on include:

- Digital Conduct (Christian Conduct)
- Digital Footprint (Spiritual Footprint)
- Digital Relationships (Godly Relationships)
- Digital Health and Wellbeing (Spiritual Health and Godly Well-being)
- Digital Law (Biblical Principles)

The course provides students with a variety of strategies to help keep them safe when using technology and also guidance regarding what to do if they feel unsafe or threatened. Parents are encouraged to engage in discussions with their children about these topics.

Students who log on to the College network will have their access and internet traffic monitored and inappropriate material blocked with the use of Netbox Blue. Whilst no system is perfect, it complements our use of an educational approach to these issues. We have also set up an email address for our students which allows them to contact the Counselling team and the Deputy Principal if they feel they are unsafe or unsure about anything they have experienced or seen: ineedhelp@gpcc.nsw.edu.au

**At Home – Communication is key**
Research has shown that digital behaviour is directly related to social behaviour – but it is much more public, with its misuse carrying some significant consequences. In light of this we encourage parents to take a positive and proactive approach to the behaviours associated with technology at home just as you would in any other social situation.

Being proactive means setting boundaries regarding the use of technology (including mobile phones) and will support positive digital usage, reflecting positive parenting.

These boundaries might include:

- Switching off the device at a reasonable hour in the evening, at least half an hour before bedtime (not having the phone messages / email / iMessages arriving at night);
- Ensuring that children use the device in a public space in the home rather than the bedroom or bathroom;
- Switching off Wi-Fi/internet in the later evening and perhaps one day a weekend;
- Not allowing devices at the dinner table or at other “family” times;
- Vetting membership of forums and other social media;
- Having access to student email / social media accounts and checking these regularly;
- Checking search history of web pages (likewise, empty search history may be concerning as well);
- Using the parental controls on a device;
- Using an internet filter at home;
- Modelling effective use of technology;
- Defining ownership of the technology and access – phone cards / Wi-Fi limits are a great way of achieving this;
- Handing in devices to parents in the evening and keeping them in a public place.

Above all, engaging your child in the discussion regarding rights and responsibilities in the world of technology is a great way to keep communication lines open and your child safe.

**On the Web – Take Control**

The following website has some helpful information which we would like parents to be aware of: [https://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/parent-resources](https://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/parent-resources)

Information on this website includes approaches to discussions and ways to mitigate against inappropriate use of technology. It also deals specifically with:

- Cyberbullying
- Selfies and sexting
- Trolling
- Dangerous, illegal and unhealthy websites
- Screen time and downtime
- Parental control tools

We recommend that parents make themselves aware of these issues at hand and develop strategies to help their children navigate this world. The common thread of all of this advice is about open communication by discussing issues and ways to deal with these in a manner that is safe for everyone.

**Continued Education**

Over the course of the year we invite parents to continue talking with us at the College. We are partnering together to provide *Excellence in Christ Centred Education* and paramount in this is the safety of our young people. Appropriate forums for discussion include the Principal’s Q&A and the *Love in Action* workshops.

Further to this, if you hear of a new app, program or online behaviour that is concerning or dangerous, please contact the College. We want to collaborate with you in sharing information about how to keep our children safe. Ongoing communication regarding safety will come through the College newsletter *The Messenger*.

If you have a specific concern regarding your child and their digital behaviour, please contact the appropriate Year Advisor in the first instance or the College Counselling team if this is required. If you have general concerns or queries, we invite you to email the Deputy Principal at the College.

© Green Point Christian College