How to protect your child from Cyberbullying

* Parents check who comes into their home through the front door and telephone. They should feel comfortable in checking who comes into the home by modern technology.

* Children are most worried about losing their internet access and this is one of the main reasons they don’t tell their parents about what is happening.

* Talk to your child: caution them about responding in kind.

* Restrict the people your child communicates with. Remove cyber bullies from the buddy list. Monitor who your child is talking to. Restrict others from adding your child to their buddy list - these enable people to track when your child is online. Restrict this in the privacy settings.

* Google your child to see what has been posted about them. Also check their screen name, nicknames, address, telephone numbers and websites.

* Block the sender. Most ISPs and IM programs have a blocking feature. Warn the sender. Bullies can use other screen names to get around the block, so you can warn” them or “notify” your ISP, which creates a record of the incident.

* Notify the ISP. Report cyber bullying to the bully’s ISP. If your child’s account has been hacked or password compromised, you should report it to your own ISP.

* Keep and print the messages as evidence and report them to the school or police.

Examples of criminal penalties in NSW

1. Getting into someone’s account and using it to send abusive emails.
   Offence: Unlawful access to protected data, section 308H Crimes Act NSW. Maximum penalty: two years.
   Offence: Intimidation, s.545AB Crimes Act NSW. Maximum penalty: five years and/or $5500.

2. Taking a photo of a person in the shower and sending it to everyone.
   Offence: Indecent Filming s.21 G Summary Offences Act NSW. Maximum penalty: two years and/or $11,000.
   Offence: Use of Carriage Service to Menace, Harass or Cause Offence—Criminal Code (Cwth) s.474.17 Maximum penalty: three years.
   If the subject of an obscene image is under 18 the mere possession of the image is a criminal offence under child protection legislation.

3. Teasing, making fun of or spreading rumours about someone online.
   Offence: Intimidation s.545AB Crimes Act NSW. Maximum penalty: five years and/or $5500

4. Flaming (ridiculing people in chat rooms) May give the aggrieved person grounds to commence civil action for defamation.

5. Harassing someone or making threats electronically.
   Offence: Intimidation s.545AB Crimes Act NSW. Maximum penalty: five years and/or $5500.
   Offence: Criminal Code (Cwth) s.474.15 — Use of Carriage Service to Make a Threat. Maximum penalty 10 years (for death threat) or seven years (for threat of serious harm).