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Improving Learning Outcomes in the Olympic Dam Region through the Transformation of Education and Community

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## Cyber Safety expert comes to Olympic Dam

Recently we had the privilege of bringing to our community, in partnership with RDAS, Australia's leading expert in cyber safety and the only independent consultant to the Federal Government in her field, Susan McLean of Cyber Safety Solutions. Susan held online safety information sessions with our primary and secondary students, held a professional development seminar for teachers and youth workers as well as an evening parent information night while she was here. Having seen the devastating effects of cyber bullying, online criminal activity and predatory offenses during her career as a police officer Susan has a no-nonsense approach to cyber safety and some very confronting information for parents.

Susan discussed cyberbullying online, the potential of online grooming of children to engage them in sexual activity, the laws around and the prevalence of use of sexting by young people and age restrictions on sites and apps. Susan asked primary students from our local schools if they were members of sites and over 60% admitted to using sites that were restricted to over 13 and in some cases over 18.



"I was shocked at the number of kids (in the 8-10 year olds session) who already have their own Facebook, kik, Instagram etc. accounts. It's not hard to check out these apps that your kids want and think no you don't need this. Susan showed the kids a film where children were asked questions like "would you leave your front door open and invite strangers into the house?" And "would you give personal pictures to a stranger or let them read your diary?" Parents need to ask their kids these questions to make them realize what they put on social media is the same thing."

- Denise Foster (parent)

# Top 10 cyber safety tips

## 1. Respect and responsibility

We need to teach our children to pause before engaging or posting online and ask themselves if what they are about to do is respectful to themselves and others, and a responsible use of technology

## 2. Cyberspace is a public space

There is often a big difference between what you intend to happen and what actually happens, as every online communication can be traced, found and re-posted or used again without your permission. Even when using the highest security settings you never have total privacy.

## 3. Nothing can be totally deleted – your content is permanently online

Experts can retrieve almost anything that has been deleted. Search engines are like the tentacles of an octopus reaching out in all directions and gathering everything in their path it will always be out there somewhere.

## 4. You are never anonymous online

The perception of anonymity can lead to un-wise risk taking and disrespectful, irresponsible behavior, but the reality is that identities can always be traced and uncovered by police and experts.

## 5. You always leave a digital footprint

Your digital footprint makes up your digital reputation. So you need to think about the sites you visit, what you post, the accounts you have and who you interact with online.

## 6. Manners maketh the man...or woman

Just as in real life, manners matter. IN cyberspace 'netiquette' includes being conscious of tone, using appropriate language, not communicating whilst under the influence of alcohol, emotion or when overtired, and remembering if you wouldn't say it to someone's face, you shouldn't write it online.

## 7. Passwords must never be shared

Parents need to be aware that children trade and use passwords as a kind of currency in order to be considered a BFF. Online predators will use passwords to search accounts for the purpose of blackmail.

## 8. There is no such thing as a safe website or app

The concept of a 'safe' website is an illusion that lulls parents into a false sense of security. Sites that attract children also attract predators. When it comes to safety, all sites rely on the security settings being used and the honesty and intention of the user.

## 9. Anyone can be anyone online

Teach your children that just as some people lie in the real world, some people lie online. Predators go to extraordinary lengths to make contact with children; they can use voice-changing software to make them sound like a boy or a girl; and the webcam might show a child who has been paid to sit there and pretend to be the person speaking.

## 10. There are laws in cyberspace

If it's a crime in the real world, it's probably a crime online too. Ensure children know it can be a criminal offense to misuse technology or to bully or harass someone online. Tell them that the exchange of naked 'selfies' or other sexually explicit images by those under the age of eighteen years is considered to be child pornography.

"I was surprised that only 38 people attended the Parent's seminar, and once I heard her message I was really disappointed that so few had come out because it was so relevant, powerful and important. As soon as I got home I checked and changed all my security settings and started reading her book 'Sexts, Texts and Selfies'. I was confronted by the notion that we can sub-consciously believe we are protected by the isolated nature of our town – but with images being uploaded into cyberspace of our children containing time and location information we make them vulnerable to dangers that exist both inside and outside of our community. One child in our town falling victim to an online predator is too high a price to pay for our ignorance. I hope her message reaches many more parents in our community and that the responsible digital citizenship program creates the momentum for community-wide awareness and changes that will protect our children."

– Hayley Scrivens (parent)

"I've increased our daughter's tablet security settings & switched off the Internet. I will definitely be investigating all Apps to ensure they are safe for our kids to play, no longer will our kids use the Internet in bedrooms. I was so shocked at how naive I was to the dangers of social media, but I will definitely be sure to pass the information on to all my friends and family."

- Danni Wilkie (parent)



## What can we do as a community to keep children cyber safe?

Susan's visit was the culmination of work begun by RDAS staff and then a working group of local educators, community members, business, a local SAPOL officer and local media, brought together under our partnership of education sites.

This group has been considering the issue of how we keep our children safe in the digital world. They are developing a Community Digital Agreement that will ask adults in our community to become models for our children and young people, showing them what a positive user of technology looks like and promoting practical tips for us all to use.



It's been eight months since the project began. The whole community has worked hard to provide us with the feedback to make this project authentically local.

This whole of community approach has required the engagement of various stakeholders. This included educators, families and young people in educational settings, health services, family support projects, early intervention programs, youth services, community services and local business. The projects suggested reflect this approach and mirror the strengths, concerns and ideas of this community

Extensive research into current best practice in education has been undertaken and the proposed projects are supported by what research shows us is best practice and influenced by strategies that have the highest effect size.

Based on the feedback to date we have begun several projects in collaboration with educators and the community.

A digital citizenship agreement is in draft form and workshops with Susan Mclean begin the learning journey for our community in this area.

A school partnership with the business forum linking with the economic and business unit of the Australian curriculum at a secondary level has commenced.

A working group is being formed across early childhood services to explore the issue of continuity of learning.

## Proposed Projects

The proposed projects are grouped into six areas: **Parent Partnerships and Learning, Community Business Partnerships with Education, Continuity of Learning Building Community Leadership, Digital Communication and Learning and Student Wellbeing and Learning.** Feedback on the proposed projects is welcome.

1.

High expectations are crucial for school success. We propose a dynamic and responsive training program for parents and educators about working together to support children's learning.

2.

Developing partnerships between schools community and business contribute greatly to successful learning. This project aims to broker and support partnerships with local community and business to provide learning in a local context.

3.

Successful early years (Birth to 8) experience is crucial to later school success. This project involves childcare, kindy and schools working together to improve children's transition from one service to another.

4.

Change happens when we have strong leadership. This leadership-training program offers an exciting training and support for local leaders and aspiring leaders.

5.

The development of a local website that offers information training and ideas for our local communities to build knowledge about local education opportunities.

6.

Training, tutoring and mentorship programs for students that meet their individual needs and lead to positive and exciting school and work outcomes.

# Inspire for girls, Odyssey for boys and good advice for parents

In August, Odyssey CEO Jane Higgins brought their highly informative, fun and engaging workshops to Roxby Downs. Odyssey for boys addressed the concerns of adolescent boys growing up in today's society. The program got the boys talking about the issues that affect them. It questioned media myths about masculinity, discussed what is most important in human relationships, and offered down-to-earth insights and advice on how to navigate the intellectual and emotional waters of this stage on their journey.

The Inspire workshop for girls used positive psychology principles to work with girls to deconstruct and challenge the impression that you need to be thin, pretty and hot to be successful. The workshops helped girls to understand the media's tricks and hidden agendas, celebrate being real girls and not just a label or 'thing, explore healthy friendships and relationships, conflict and self-care, tools to have respectful friendships free of exclusion and gossiping.

Workshops were attended by staff from St Barbara's Parish School and Roxby Downs Area School so that the learnings from the program can be built upon and followed up in the classroom.

A parent session was also held where Jane discussed, bullying, drugs & alcohol, mental health, sexuality & body image, and other issues to assist parents to understand the pressures their sons and daughters face and tips for building healthier relationships with teens.



## Students said...

**Boys** "The speaker and the things I learned were great - I learnt what girls want in a relationship, about peoples' sexuality and how to control my anger - Thank you so much for coming out."

"I learnt be patient, don't get angry and be cool calm and collected – Thank you heaps for today I will definitely be using what you taught me in my everyday life “

"It goes more in depth than school – I learnt how to make best choices, to be respectful of everyone and don't bottle everything up It was great being able to learn things about life that I never thought about before – I learnt how to be a man, why it's important to be respectful and about sex “

**Girls** "I loved learning that everyone doubts themselves and it is not just me – I learnt it is ok not to act ok, that I am loved and I don't need to change for anybody – You need to come back “

"Thank you for giving me strength"

"I loved that it was so easy to talk or listen to what you were saying – I learnt that controlling is not love, that you don't need a guy to tell you who you are and that you are beautiful in everything – I will always remember this. “

"I loved the enthusiasm you brought and the information you gave – I learnt not to let people define us, we are all unique and we are loved"

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