

Police warn young about cyber safety

EDITORIAL

By JAKE HARBORNE

CYBER bullying has caused much controversy in the past few years. It has created hurt, anxiety and sometimes serious consequences for those affected.

Bullying online allows the perpetrator to hide behind a computer, a phone or a tablet device.

Children and teenagers these days are dealing with self-esteem issues because they are being put down and negatively influenced by others through online means.

Twenty years ago cyber safety was unheard of, hence none of this terrible cyber bullying was happening. But as we know, times have dramatically changed and technology is progressing at a rapid rate.

Applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, KiK, instant text and email are providing the means for the cyber bullying affair to occur.

All too often cyber bullying happens without parental guidance or supervision. Children can become easily involved.

These days most children over the age of 12 have a mobile phone or devices that give them access to the internet. The question needs

to be asked, at what age are children mature enough to own a mobile phone to have unsupervised access to the internet and expose themselves to the possible dangers that result?

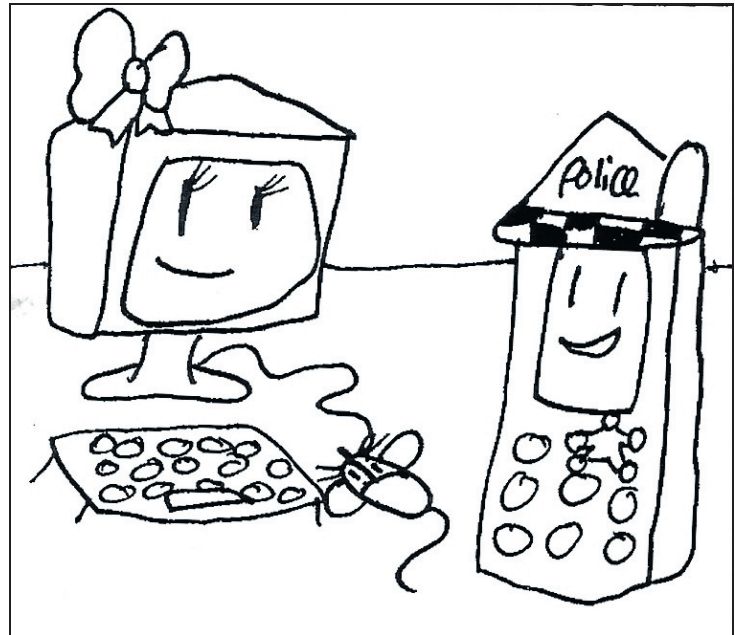
Senior Constable Darren Fleming, the Newcastle Youth Police liaison officer, said in a meeting with senior students at St John's Lambton: "I believe that inappropriate online behaviour can have major consequences for the youth of today."

Warning students to be safe online, he emphasised that social networking sites such as Facebook place age restrictions to keep children safe. "The legal age to create an account with Facebook is 13. If you create an account and you are under this age then you are not only lying, you are breaking the law."

Though the internet can be a valuable tool that allows the user access to unlimited information, at the hands of those who misuse this privilege it can become dangerous and harmful.

Cyber bullying is an issue that is spreading across the globe and if something is not done, the results could be dire for future generations.

With low self-esteem, self-harm and even suicide a lot more common today to what it was years ago, society needs to question, when is enough enough?



Cartoon: Elizah Howard



FOCUSED: James Virgili encourages students Joseph Licata and Adam Mlinaric to follow their dreams. Picture: Copahl Fakhoury

Player's goal is on the ball

By JOSEPH LICATA

JAMES Virgili, 20, was a regular starter for the Newcastle Jets last season. He was born in Newcastle and went to St Therese's Primary School in New Lambton.

He began his soccer career at South Wallsend Wolves at the age of six. There he spent some of his favourite seasons before joining Newcastle Football.

James then rose again to Northern NSW Football where he then joined the NSW Institute of Sport at age 15.

In 2008, James was signed by the Jets. He made his first appearance against Wellington Phoenix in 2009 as a second-half substitution. Three weeks later against Sydney, Gary

Van Egmond looked to the bench players and brought him on.

Although they lost 4-0, James became more popular, making many appearances during the next couple of seasons.

He was chosen in the squad for the Under 20 Socceroos where he made one appearance. He was scouted by Celtic in 2010 but unfortunately was not signed to the club.

James played more games for the Jets and by 2012 he was a squad regular.

He is hoping to keep improving in the A-League and one day go overseas. Determined for success, he said: "If you don't make a team or squad, don't give up." He is looking forward to playing next season.

Darcy worms her way into book challenge

By CALEB BRIDGES

TO promote the Premier's Reading Challenge, St John's Primary School is visited each year by Darcy, the book worm puppet.

According to teacher librarian, Juliann Smith, "Children are able to relate to Darcy the book worm, who features on the Premier's Reading Challenge website."

The Premier's Reading Challenge is available to all NSW students from kindergarten to year 9. Developed by the NSW

Government, the challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for leisure and pleasure in students and to enable them to experience quality literature.

It is not a competition, but a challenge put forward to each student, encouraging them to read a wide variety of texts especially selected for their age group.

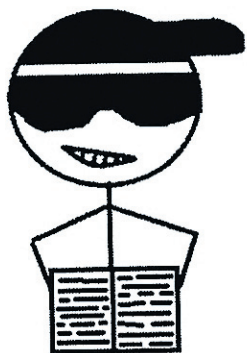
Ms Smith knows the value of the challenge, saying: "It encourages students to read more widely and helps to improve their literacy."



READY TO READ: Darcy making one of her regular appearances at St John's. Picture: Oscar Gilson

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