

COMMON GROUND CHURCH

INSIGHTS MEETING

NEXT STEPS AND CRITICAL INFORMATION

If anyone has any information regarding the case, please contact the police directly through Warrant Officer **Rowan Andrews - 0827298155.**

If anyone would like to seek **professional counselling** in response to this situation please call one of the following professionals, and mention that you are contacting them in connection with this incident so that we are able to cover the costs:

- Bev Draper (0832743183)
- Ruth Ward (0837886441)
- Anne Cawood (0834800822)

We would like to encourage you to move towards your school counsellor, your church/congregational pastor or alternatively you can contact us on our **Youth and Parent Hotline - 0842088306.**

ARTICLE 1

UNDERSTANDING TEENAGER TALK, WHAT ARE THEY SAYING TO EACH OTHER?

On Safer Internet Day (7 February 2017), UK Internet service provider BT revealed that 5.2 million adults are clueless when it comes to interpreting what kids are saying online.

Over 4,500 adults took part in the research, and the majority were not able to translate the real meaning of slang that children use on the internet and cellphones.

A different study conducted by South African Kids Online interviewed 552 parents to find out how they used the internet themselves and how they mediated their children's internet use. The study found that although children are generally active, engaged internet users, they tend not to receive much support from their parents, teachers and friends around their internet use, and generally were free to use the internet without supervision. This suggests that children are in need of more support from their parents, teachers and friends, around how to use the internet safely, which includes monitoring internet and cellphone chats and language.

We're not advocating that you try to read all messages and online chats (or that you start using these acronyms and symbols yourself!), but being aware of common codes can help you identify any potential problems and keep children safe online.

Here are some hints to help you crack the code:

Emojis

- Cheeky Monkey with paws over its mouth = "I won't tell anyone"
- Emoji face with cross eyes = sometimes used to indicate that children have seen something X-rated online

10 Texting codes every parent and teacher should be aware of

- **WTPA** – Where the party at?
- **PAL** – Parents are listening
- **P999** – Parent alert
- **KOTL** – Kiss on the lips
- **NIFOC** – Nude in front of the Computer
- **420** – Marijuana
- **182** – I hate you
- **SMH** – Shaking my head
- **SOS** – Someone over shoulder
- **PIR** – Parent in room

And these aren't even the most serious ones. Although KMS was interpreted by 65% of parents as "Keep my secret", the acronym actually means "Kill myself".

The cryptic number "99" indicates that "Parents have stopped watching"; GNOC = "Get naked on camera"; and only 4% of the adults surveyed could identify decipher MIA, which is used by some young people online when they are talking about Bulimia, an eating disorder.

But rather than just be known as a code-cracker, parents should speak to young people about how they use social media and chat online. Children's use of the internet is developing at a rapid pace, and online safety starts with a conversation.

What you can do:

- Talk to your children and students about their life online – what sites do they visit? How do they spend their time? Who do they chat to? Which apps do they use?
- Make them aware of types of issues to look out for, such as cyberbullying and online privacy
- Most importantly, let them know that you are there to support and protect them, not just be SOS (remember what that one means?)

ARTICLE 2

SEXTING

What is it, and what can be done?

Sexting is a term used to describe when an individual sends sexually explicit texts, photos or videos via technological mediums such as social media or cell phones. So why do teenagers engage in sexting? Well according to senior prosecuting attorney who was quoted in the New York Times, “teenagers use sexting as a way of advertising that they are sexually active... it is seen as a form of safe sex as you can't get pregnant from it or get any sexually transmitted diseases”. Another reason could be that they want to flirt or that they feel pressured to 'return the favour' if their partner sent them some alluring pictures.

Consequences of Sexting

Teenagers need to be aware of the consequences of sexting. They need to remember that any pictures sent online or via cell phone can be accessed by an outside source.

The sexually alluring pictures you send are no longer yours and you no longer own them. If any of the pictures are released to the public your reputation could be damaged for years to come.

It is also important to note that in some cases sexting nude pictures of oneself has been considered the same as pornography, which many teenagers have been prosecuted for.

Teenagers, what should you do?

It is crucial to stick to your morals and values in life. You need to ask yourself what type of person you would like to be and how you would like others to perceive you. You must understand how sexting can affect your reputation and relationships in life.

What parents can do if you find your child sexting

Communication is very important. Parents are role models for their children and they need to practice what they preach. If parents tell their children to get off the Internet at dinnertime then they need to do the same and set a good example. If you see something on your child's Facebook that is alarming, you must strike up a conversation with your child and say something along the lines of "I was browsing Facebook and came across one of your posts that I am concerned about and would like to talk about".

Parents must also share their values and morals about sex and relationships and give children the support they need in order to make good decisions in life. Allow your child to talk openly about sex with you and let them ask questions about certain things that they want to understand.

ARTICLE 3

0% OF TEENAGERS UNDERSTAND THE INSTAGRAM FINE PRINT

The photo sharing app Instagram is used by 56% of 12 to 15-year-olds and 43% of eight to 11-year-olds, yet none of them fully understand what the app's terms and conditions commit them to.

A recent study tested the ability of teenagers to understand Instagram's terms and conditions and revealed that none of them could grasp all the implications of using the site.

The panel conducting the study then condense and simplified the app's terms and conditions, making them more accessible and easier to read. The same group of children and teens were then able to understand them easily.

And what did they have to say about the terms and conditions once they understood them?

- After reading the re-written terms and conditions, a 13-year-old boy said he planned on deleting Instagram because he thought it was “weird”.
- Another teen said he now realised how much of his personal data he’d been giving away.

In response to the study, Instagram’s head of policy, Michelle Napchan said: “We have always prioritised giving people easy to understand, clear information about our safety and privacy policies.” She also said that Instagram does go beyond the list of terms and conditions – the app offers privacy and safety help and has also produced a guide for parents to help them talk about Internet safety with their teenagers. Social media sites such as Instagram are also expected to have robust monitoring and reporting practices to address inappropriate content.

But we can’t leave it to social media companies to do the job of a trusted adult. The best way to ensure social media safety is to educate our children about what happens why they share content online – who can see it, who can use it, where it goes, and get them to start thinking carefully before posting anything online.

ARTICLE 4

FACEBOOK TIPS

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks out there for adults and teens alike. Here are some tips and tricks for becoming a ‘power user’ (and impressing your children while you’re at it!)

1. You can save something in your news feed to view later –

Facebook allows you to book mark video, photo, places, links and more, then access them on the ‘Saved’ page on your profile.

2. You can stop those annoying Candy Crush requests forever – under the “More” tab in Facebook’s mobile app, select “Settings” > “Account Settings” > “Notifications.” Go to “Mobile,” scroll down, un-tick “Application Invites”

3. Turn your profile into an animated GIF – select your profile picture > “Take a New Profile Video” allows you to upload a short video loop.

4. Use the Trending list to keep tabs on the latest news on Facebook (this can be found on the right of the News Feed (on a desktop); and under the search bar for Facebook mobile.

5. You can prevent News Feed videos from playing automatically – on the mobile app, go to “More” > “Videos and Photos.” Here you can choose when to auto-play videos.

6. Want to know what you’ve been up to on Facebook? – Your Activity Log documents your Facebook activity, such as everything you’ve liked, shared, and commented on.

7. Never want to miss out? – if there are certain pages and profiles whose updates you’d always like to see, go to “More” > “Settings” > “News Feed Preferences”

8. What does your profile look like to your friends and the public? – On a desktop, go to your profile > click the ellipsis > “View as...”

9. Hide a post from someone – you can choose who sees your posts on a case-by-case basis. Use the drop-down menu at the top right of a post. Select “Edit Privacy” > select one of the options.

10. Hide your friend list – on your friend list, click “Manage” > “Edit Privacy.” Here you can change who can see your followers, friends list and the people you follow.

These simple settings can personalise your Facebook experience, making it more private and more suited to your needs.

Articles taken from:

- <https://saferinternetsouthafrica.co.za/>
- <https://saferinternetday.co.za/>