Cyber Safety

I thought I would share some material from my seminar on cyber bullying as it is vital to our kids' survival. It is pretty much agreed that computers should be kept in common areas of the home and not in the bedrooms of children under the age of 16. When threatening messages occur on computer screens, they are less likely to cause alarm and panic if the child is in the company of others or in an area where others dwell. The isolation and desperation felt by many kids in their bedrooms has a big impact on them when cyber-bullying is present in their bedrooms. It is also a good idea for them to switch their phones off at an agreed time at night to prevent the same harassment occurring throughout the night and often making sleep less efficient as a result. Traditional bullies were never in your bedroom (which was a safe haven) in the past – we need to keep it that way.

People using mobile phones and the Internet to harass and bully others are violating the terms of use of ISPs and Mobile Phone Contracts. We need to remind providers of this and, hence, limit these people's use of these devices and make it much harder for them to engage in online bullying.

It is very likely that kids who are victims of cyber bullying are also off-line victims as well. So please ask parents to make that connection and look for signs in both realms. The sudden escalation in the possible number of spectators and the probable anonymity of the cyber bully makes these forms of harassment very hard to deal with for kids today. In the Bullying and Behaviour seminar I conduct I go into great detail as to how to bully proof our kids and what types of policies and practices homes and schools need to employ to help combat this growing problem.

Some excellent websites worth saving as favourites are:

- **www.theline.gov.au**
- **www.ncab.org.au**
- **www.amf.org.au**