

# Canterbury College Approach to Social Media, Online Safety & Deepfakes

*"In the age of AI, there's a paradox.*

*Students don't need teachers less – they need them more. Not to compete with technology but to guide its use. To challenge students to do hard things now that will be good for them later. To model curiosity, integrity and grit."*

*Professor Angela Duckworth, University of Pennsylvania*

*"It's important for young people under 18 to understand that the creation and distribution of nude or sexual deepfakes (even as a misguided joke or meme) can be a criminal offence in some states, as it is for adults across the country."*

*e-Safety Commissioner*

Students today are digital natives who interact with technology from an early age, yet they often lack the critical thinking skills necessary to identify and respond to online threats. Traditional concerns such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content exposure, and digital addiction remain significant issues. The rise of deepfake technology represents a particularly concerning development, with research indicating that young students are being targeted by deepfake images, representing a disturbing trend in school cyberbullying, and students can very easily become involved in criminal acts, often because of a misguided joke.

Effective online safety requires strong partnerships between school and home. Schools and parents need to work together to ensure that the appropriate information is shared and arrangements are in place to enable students to interact with the online world with increasing independence but with appropriate protective factors to enable good decision making.

## **Q: How is Canterbury College responding to these challenges?**

### **Phone-free learning environment**

Canterbury College has implemented a comprehensive phone policy ensuring students do not have access to their mobile devices during the school day. This decision aligns with recent government guidance backing headteachers in prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including at break times.

## High-quality relationships and pastoral care

Canterbury prioritises the wellbeing of our students. We ensure that throughout each student's time at school they have access to a range of staff with the necessary skills and training to ensure that students feel comfortable and safe to reach out, and that they then receive best practice support when they do so.

## Advanced Technological Solutions

Canterbury College utilizes Saasyan Assure software to provide comprehensive online safety monitoring and support. This system includes advanced web filtering with real-time blocking of inappropriate content, customizable filtering based on age and educational requirements, and regular updates to address emerging threats. The system provides real-time safety and wellbeing risk alerts, which enables early intervention to support students. In the near future, we will be launching the Saasyan Parent Portal, which will enable parents to monitor the activity of their children on Canterbury devices whilst at home and also to apply filters to block access to inappropriate content.

## Character and Resilience Education (CaRE) Program

At Canterbury, we recognise that education, rather than purely restrictive measures, is the most effective long-term approach to digital safety.

The Technologies strand of the Australian Curriculum ensure that all students from Prep to Year 8 are engaging in this space in the context of their classroom learning. In addition to this, the Character and Resilience Education (CaRE) program provides comprehensive education on traditional digital citizenship concepts including understanding digital footprints, responsible social media use, privacy protection, and recognizing inappropriate content. We have also developed specialized curriculum components addressing deepfakes and AI-generated content.

In 2025, students have received the following presentations from external providers in addition to the content in class:

**Bravehearts (Y1-3):** Introduction to protective behaviours and body awareness

**U think U know (Y3-6):** Delivered by the Queensland Police Service, this is an age-appropriate program that supports student in understanding the factors involved in online grooming and preventing child sexual exploitation.

**True Puberty (Y4-6):** Supports students by providing a positive and empowering experience as they navigate the anxiety and awkwardness of puberty and the development of an understanding of respectful relationships.

**Rock and Water (Y6):** Rock and Water is a series of exercises and games are practised to develop confidence and self-reflection. The games are diverse and many have a martial arts origin. Students learn to stand strong, negotiate using “rock” or “water” verbal approaches, walk away from trouble, consider alternatives to aggression, and develop understandings about who they are, their intuitive feelings and their personal direction.

**Sacred Sister Project (Y6 and 7):** Through a holistic positive mindset, the Sacred Sister Project aims to guide girls in exploring unconventional ideas, promoting self-discovery, and cultivating a sense of empowerment. It covers three main topics: Voice of Judgement vs Voice of Wisdom, Mindfulness on Social Media and Beautiful Bodies, Beautiful Qualities.

**Daniel Principe (Y7-10):** Daniel is no stranger to the complex challenges that our distracted digital world presents in adolescence. Toxic influencers. Limiting stereotypes. The objectification of women and girls. Unrealistic expectations fuelled by porn culture. Harmful messages like these bombard today’s youth through social media, advertising, online content and the culture around them. Daniel encourages his audiences to aspire to healthy relationships built on mutual respect and empathy.

**Peer Power (Y7-10):** The good news is the challenges of engaging the youth of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are not insurmountable! Our program, Youth of the 21st Century sets a helpful course for navigating the digital world of adolescents today.

**Adair Donaldson (Y11 and 12):** “Preventing all young people from making poor decisions is not realistic, but it is possible to ensure that they understand what the consequences will be.” The presentation focuses on the legal consequences of: Underage parties and alcohol; Codes of conduct and the impact of behaviour outside of school hours; social media; mobile phones; sexual harassment; consent; domestic violence in schools; racism.

## **Q: How does Canterbury handle incidents when they occur?**

- Our first priority is to make sure that students are safe and cared for. We have a team of staff including Heads of House, Counsellors, Assistant Heads of School, Heads of School and other Student Protection Officers, who will work together with families to provide a coordinated response.
- If behaviour has occurred that is potentially a criminal matter, it will be reported to the police and the school will wait for confirmation from the police before proceeding with any internal investigation.
- Students who are involved in a police investigation may be stood down from school and complete schoolwork from home until the process is complete.
- Parents and families are similarly encouraged to report criminal matters to the police, and to e-Safety, using the Report Abuse portal, in addition to us at school. Further advice around reporting can be obtained from the [e-Safety Commissioner](#).

- We will act to ensure that incidents are investigated in accordance with our Student Behaviour Investigations Procedure, so that they can be resolved in a way which is just and that the appropriate learning occurs for students involved.
- All involved should be aware that saving or sharing of explicit content even in the context of an investigation is also a criminal offense and therefore evidence should be collected in the form of screenshots, links or usernames only that can then be investigated by authorities. Explicit material should not be viewed, collected, printed, shared or stored.

## **Q. What can parents do at home to help protect their children?**

- Be engaged with your child's online and technology use and enable open communication and discussion. They need to feel that they have your trust to take appropriate amounts of responsibility for themselves, within reasonable limits.
- Develop some negotiated rules around time on devices and the level of access and privacy that children have while online. These rules will evolve as your child gets older. Model the behaviour you would like to see in your child.
- Use safety features and settings that are available either on your child's device, software or internet provider
- More information for parents and carers can be found via the e-Safety website [Parents | eSafety Commissioner](#)