

Monday, 13 November 2017

## 'Think before you ink' on social media at 'Schoolies'

As thousands of teenagers get ready to celebrate 'Schoolies', Kids Helpline is reminding young people to think before they post, share or upload on social media to stay safe, and create positive digital 'tattoos' and memories of their experience.

'Schoolies' week celebrations start from 18 November for many thousands of young high school leavers. While the week can be great fun creating wonderful memories for a lifetime, **yourtown** Head of Client Services and Kids Helpline (KHL) Brendan Bourke said it's important for those celebrating to think about their online safety when using social media, look out for the online safety of friends, and remember just how permanent images, videos and posts can be.

"While technology provides us with great opportunities to meet new people, create and share our experiences there are things we all need to think about to protect ourselves," Mr Bourke said.

"Research released just last month by the National eSafety Commissioner revealed a significant number of Australians have experienced image-based abuse with statistics as high as one in five for women aged 18-45 and one in four for Indigenous Australians."

"From July to December 2016, more than 1,500 counselling contacts to KHL were from children and young people concerned, worried or feeling unsafe as a result of online or texting activity. This included sexting, receiving unwanted online contact, viewing disturbing digital content, disclosure of personal information, harassment and suspected grooming, and concerns about their digital reputation.

"While these statistics can seem alarming, there are things we can do to help reduce risk and ensure we can enjoy the great things social media and Apps offer us."

**What goes online, stays online** – Our online presence is like a 'digital tattoo' – it's there forever. Your reputation is important long after Schoolies or other celebrations are over. What we post, upload or share will more than likely stay there. 'Think before you ink' on social media.

**Look out for your mates** – Just as you look out for each other when out at night partying it's also important to support and look out for each other digitally. If you see something posted about one of your friends that's not right or causes you concern, check in with them and make sure they are OK.

**Think before you share photos and videos** – Post memories you'll cherish – not ones you might regret. Once it's posted, it's no longer private and could be viewed by friends, family and strangers.

**Keep sexting laws in mind** – It might seem like fun but sexting can have serious consequences. If you're under 18 you could end up in trouble with the law. Taking, sending or receiving nude or explicit images of a person under 18 is illegal – even if it's of yourself! When you send a nude photo of yourself to someone, what happens to it and where it goes next is often out of your control. Your photo could end up anywhere.

**Think before revealing information about yourself via hook-up and location settings in Apps** – Be careful about sharing personal information, such as your full name, phone number, email and address via Apps like Tinder and Snapchat. Check out the privacy settings of the App and get to know someone through chat before disclosing personal information or meeting in person. You're in control.

**All is not lost** – If someone posts something you're not happy about ask them to delete it and watch them do it or report it to the social media platform. If you're unsure of what to do, check out the eSafety website for other tips that might help or contact Kids Helpline. We're here to listen any time and for any reason.

“We want young people celebrating Schoolies to stay safe while having a great time, look out for their friends and remember there’s always help at any time and for any reason through KHL,” Mr Bourke said

“If you’re feeling unsafe or are just not sure about what to do in a situation when at Schoolies contact us. If you want to talk things over when you come home from Schoolies we are also here to chat.”

KHL works in partnership with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to help children and young people tackle online safety. Visit eSafety at [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

KHL is Australia’s only free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call **1800 55 1800** or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

**ENDS**

#### **INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES**

- Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services/KHL
- Tony FitzGerald, KHL Virtual Services Manager
- Louise Davis, KHL Clinical Practice Manager
- KHL Counsellors
- VNR footage available of Kids Helpline call centre

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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I <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/newsroom/media-releases/online-portal-helps-australians-impacted-by-image-based-abuse>  
accessed 10 November 2017.