

AMTA AND ACSSO TEAM UP

The Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA), the body representing the mobile phone industry, is partnering ACSSO to help parents promote their children's safe and responsible use of mobile phones in the school environment.

AMTA, which represents companies such as Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Hutchison 3, Nokia, Motorola and Samsung, has a broad charter. It aims to promote an environmentally, socially and economically responsible, successful and sustainable mobile telecommunications industry in Australia.

Our industry seeks to maximize the beneficial impacts of mobile phones by engaging with the community. We also take measures to minimize the risks associated with the misuse of mobile technology.

Although we believe the positive aspects far outweigh the negative, we are committed to providing practical advice and safeguards for consumers to assist them in managing their mobile phone use in a safe, responsible and affordable manner.

Cyber bullying is unacceptable and can spoil young people's positive and productive experiences of mobile telecommunications. It is potentially against the law in serious cases and can lead to fear and students feeling alone and misunderstood.

The victims of cyber bullying can often feel that adults, including their parents and teachers, don't understand their problems and believe adults have no understanding of their attachment to technology and fear their mobiles will be confiscated.

The mobile phone industry is committed to providing practical advice to help prevent cyber bullying through education and awareness. We have developed tips to tell young people what they need to know "to get the bullies of their backs". Also, it has provided information for parents and teachers to assist the victims of cyber bullying.

A whole-of-school approach to the use of mobile in schools requires students, parents and teachers working together in a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to provide a cyber-safe environment.

AMTA's work with ACSSO aims to involve parents more effectively in school community partnerships. Understanding young people's use of mobile technology and knowing more about the technology itself can help parents be more aware of the potentially harmful effects of cyber bullying and assist them in supporting schools in their management of technology.

Independent research by leading Australian social scientists has shown that mobile telecommunications provide an important link for families to stay in touch while on the move and balancing busy family and work responsibilities. Parents can stay in touch with their children anywhere, anytime.

Although misuse of mobile phones can present undeniable problems, harnessing the productive use of mobile technology can enhance the learning environment and involve parents in their children's learning experiences.

As a key enabler, mobile technology is opening up more opportunities for people to participate, contribute to and benefit from an increasingly connected and productive society.

Chris Althaus
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association
www.amta.org.au