



This week's stories from the media

- Police launch safety blitz in SA school zones
- Serious cyberbullying skyrockets in under 14s
- Mid-year intake restored at preschools
- Ten ways to prevent cyberattacks in schools
- What does a virtual school look like
- Government expands graduate teacher program

Serious Cyberbullying Skyrockets

Serious cyberbullying of children under the age of 14 has more than tripled since before the covid pandemic.

Real texts from cyberbullies have been released to show parents the types of shocking messages kids are sending each other.

It comes as the eSafety Commission exclusively revealed "serious cyberbullying" involving under 14s has more than tripled compared to before the pandemic, with 230 complaints in May, the largest on record.

And kids sending or receiving these types of messages – often littered with expletives and threats of violence – are getting younger, with incidents involving children as young as eight, according to the online regulator.

Online safety expert Leonie Smith said it was not a surprise there had been a rise in cyberbullying among primary school kids because many have access to social media platforms such as Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram, before the recommended age of 13.

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Police Launch Safety Blitz In SA School Zones

Police are blitzing school zones around the state in a bid to keep children safe in the first week back from holidays.

Operation Return to School is in response to increased traffic volumes during school pick-up and drop-off times.

Police said young people were more vulnerable around roads because they were smaller and less visible to drivers, their behaviour could be less predictable than adults, and they might have an error of judgment when dealing with traffic.

Officer in Charge of Traffic, Superintendent Darren Fielke, said the operation was vital because the state had lost 68 lives on our roads this year, and "still people choose to do the wrong thing."

"As families get back into a routine and return to school, police will continue to target drivers who speed, fail to belt-up, take illicit drugs before driving or make other poor decisions which can put other road users at unnecessary risk," Fielke said.

"We continue to randomly test drivers for drugs and alcohol, even around schools, so our message is simple: Do not drug or drink drive."

"Roads will be busy, so remember to stay patient, reduce your speed to 25km/h in school zones and allow a bit of extra time during school runs."

During the last operation run in May, police visited 284 schools across the state and issued 65 expiation notices for several offences.

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“...Roads will be busy, so remember to stay patient, reduce your speed to 25km/h in school zones....”

Mid-Year Intake Restored At Preschools

Mid-year intakes for government preschools have returned for children born between May 1 and October 31 – but it’s sparked concerns about finding enough qualified workers.

About 4000 youngsters are stepping into a classroom as part of the first mid-year intake at public preschools in a decade.

It has been reintroduced after intakes at government preschools were limited to one a year in 2014.

Educators say it will give families more options but concerns have been raised about finding enough qualified workers.

UniSA early childhood program director Susie Raymond said she had been hearing across the sector that it was proving “challenging”.

The Education Department’s workforce management team has recruited 277 extra staff – including directors, teachers and support officers – over the past year to cater for an influx of children.

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Ten Ways To Prevent Cyberattacks In Schools

Australian schools are a primary target for cyberattacks, with the education and training sector reporting the highest rate of ransomware incidents in 2021-22.

The education and training sector now accounts for over 6% of all cyberattacks in Australia.

Experts have identified a concerning rise in financial fraud related to automated school systems like Single Sign On (SSO).

Concerningly, skilled hackers can scrape credit card details through insecure payment gateways when parents pay school fees online.

School faculty are another frequent target of sophisticated phishing attacks. Seemingly innocuous prompts to update software can grant cybercriminals access to a school’s database and student information.

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Virtual Schools

At the Virtual School Victoria (VSV), it was business as usual during the pandemic.

Teaching and learning at the Virtual School is done via Webex, where students have access to their teachers via phone, email, and a messaging platform.

Staff are a collaborative team who meet virtually to discuss students, curriculum matters and school-related issues.

At the Virtual School, students are not required to have their screens on all day every day.

Students are expected to work with their learning supervisors, either their parents or a supervisor at their home school, to create a timetable to tackle their workload.

[Full Story](#)

School Tree Day

Friday is national school tree day!



Graduate Teacher Program Expands

The Nexus primary pilot program will send 105 aspiring teachers to schools in NSW and VIC with staff shortages.

La Trobe’s education dean, Joanna Barbousa said the initial pilot which was rolled out in Victoria in 2020 had been an “extraordinary success”.

The first phase of the plan has focused on reforming early teacher education and recruiting more graduates and mid-career professionals into teaching.

“Graduates of our Nexus program are exceptionally passionate and committed to working in schools - a huge win for students and their communities.”

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