

## The Wrap

# Cyber bullies to be defined

Government responds to committee's recommendation.

**T**he federal government has agreed to develop a national definition of cyber-bullying, as recommended by a parliamentary inquiry.

But it has stopped short of acting on other recommendations until a cyber white paper is released later this year.

As part of its report into online safety and young people the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety recommended that an agreed definition of cyber-bullying be developed and used by all government departments and agencies.

In its response to the report the federal government agreed to the recommendation and said the Safe

and Supportive School Communities Group has developed a definition of cyber-bullying.

The government said the definition will be discussed and agreed to by state and territory governments.

"The definition of cyber-bullying agreed through these consultation processes will be promoted nationally via government programs and resources," it said.

The inquiry made 32 recommendations to improve the safety of young people when they are online.

The government agreed with many of them in principle, such as more educational programs in schools and the development of national core standards for cyber-safety education. But it said



THINKSTOCK

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it would wait for the outcomes of the cyber white paper process before taking further action.

The government also noted that it had already implemented several cyber-safety initiatives such as the Youth Advisory Group to provide advice to governments and the Cybersmart website. •

### LINKS

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## Question Time

### Order in the House

The following is a question from a reader of *About the House*.

#### Question

What powers does the Speaker have to control proceedings in the House of Representatives?

#### Answer

The Speaker, as the presiding officer in the House of Representatives, has a variety of powers to direct debate and maintain order in the House. These powers, exercised impartially, are described in the standing orders of the House, which detail the

procedures that underpin the conduct of proceedings.

The Speaker can intervene when a member's conduct is considered offensive or disorderly. Such conduct could include persistently obstructing the House, refusing to conform to a standing order or wilfully disregarding the authority of the Speaker. The standing orders give the Speaker the power to sanction members for engaging in this sort of conduct.

One of the best known standing orders is 94(a), which can be invoked at any time but is often referred to when members are sanctioned for disorderly conduct during Question Time. Under standing order 94(a) the Speaker can direct a disorderly member to leave the chamber for one hour. The direction is not open to debate.

If the member refuses to leave, or if the Speaker believes the conduct is too serious to be dealt with under 94(a), the Speaker can name the member under standing order 94(b). Naming a member is more serious, requiring the House to immediately vote on the question of whether the member should be suspended from the service of the House for 24 hours.

Under standing order 75 (used rarely) the Speaker may direct a member who in the opinion of the Speaker has persistently engaged in irrelevance or tedious repetition to discontinue their speech. The Speaker may also rise in his or her place, which under standing order 61 requires any member then speaking to sit down and for the House to be silent so the Speaker can be heard. •

### Do you have a question?

If you have a question about the House of Representatives email [news@aph.gov.au](mailto:news@aph.gov.au) or write to About the House, International and Community Relations Office, PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600. Questions published in *About the House* will receive our history pack *A House for the Nation* on the first 100 years of the House of Representatives.