

# Principles for responding to online incidents

## Toolkit for Universities

Creating safer online environments



This resource provides high-level principles to help frame university policies and procedures for responding to online incidents. It also offers guidance on appropriate actions and clarifies responsibilities.

**Disclaimer:** This material is general in nature. It is made available on the understanding that the Commonwealth is not engaged in rendering professional advice. Before relying on the material in any matter, you should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for your purposes and should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances. The Commonwealth does not guarantee, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any material contained in this resource or on any linked site. References to other organisations or websites are inserted for convenience and do not constitute endorsement.



Universities are committed to promoting student and staff safety and wellbeing, including when they engage online. To fully support students, it is important to have comprehensive policies and procedures in place, that enable universities to respond to any online safety incident appropriately and with speed.

The following principles can help universities with online safety planning and responses.

## Principles:

1.

Online safety is part of the mission and values of a university and is incorporated in the institution's policy framework.

2.

University communities are made aware of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour on all university-affiliated platforms and social media.

3.

All members of the university community are familiar with their legal and ethical responsibilities for online safety.

4.

Online safety incidents are considered factors which can affect a student's ability to learn, and a teacher's ability to teach.

5.

Universities raise awareness of eSafety, its resources and reporting services to their communities.

6.

Universities provide support to anyone targeted by online abuse, including content removal, access to support services and setting in place policies and codes of conduct.

7.

The safety and wellbeing of anyone targeted by online abuse is at the centre of a University's response – considering their rights, views and wishes.

8.

Universities will investigate online incidents involving staff or students, seeking advice from the appropriate contacts within the university community as needed (for example, faculty leadership, Safer Community or IT teams).

9.

Where appropriate, universities will work in partnership with external services to offer the necessary supports to anyone targeted by online abuse.