

# WE NEED TO TALK:

## ADULT TOOLS COME WITH ADULT CONSEQUENCES

This is the second of our four-part newsletter in the “We Need to Talk” series. In this issue we will address current legislation as it pertains to social media and the various forms of technology that your children and our students are using. It is important to note that often times the devices used by our youth are registered in their parent/guardian’s name. Therefore, the activity on these devices may have consequences for the registered owner as well as the person using the device.

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board values and respects the power of social media. We endeavour to model responsible use of current technology every day. On Monday, May 5th of Education Week, we will be addressing your children about the consequences of risky and inappropriate online behavior and the potential legal, school, social and emotional consequences associated with it.

### Current laws related to cyber bullying:

While all cyber bullying is hurtful, some may be illegal. When name-calling, insults and ridicule escalate to harassment, threats, and intimidation, a youth could face criminal charges.

Current criminal laws already apply to most forms of serious cyber bullying such as criminal harassment or uttering threats. However, with digital technology changing rapidly, and the behaviours that go along with it, our laws need to change as well. The Government of Canada is committed to enabling law enforcement to take action when warranted, and is proposing changes to the *Criminal Code* to make that possible.

Depending on the exact nature of the cyber bullying behaviour, the following current *Criminal Code* offences could be charged:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal harassment</li> <li>• Uttering threats</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Mischief in relation to data</li> <li>• Unauthorized use of a computer</li> <li>• Identity fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• False messages, indecent or harassing telephone calls</li> <li>• Counseling suicide</li> <li>• Incitement of hatred</li> <li>• Child pornography</li> <li>• Defamatory libel</li> </ul>
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The age of 18 is an important age in Canada for many reasons. Once a person reaches the age of 18, he/she is now the legal age to enter into a contract. A contract is a binding agreement that adults enter into. In order to own a Facebook, Gmail, Hotmail, Pinterest, Vine, or virtually any account, a person must be 18. Many parents will not take issue with their children using these adult services. As well, preventing children from accessing social media is near impossible. The key is to teach your children and our students how to use these tools responsibly. All of the accounts your children currently hold are for adults and the content created on these accounts may carry adult consequences.

