

Children Cyber Safety campaign launched in Sharjah

The organising committee of the “Child Safety Campaign,” at Supreme Council for Family Affairs initiative, and ICDL Arabia, the regional arm of the international body responsible for teaching computing skills, IT security and cyber-safety, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Sunday. The MoU aims to raise awareness among Sharjah-based parents and children on the safe, effective and responsible use of the Internet.

Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, Wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah and Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, praised the efforts of the Child Safety Campaign and its partners from government organisations and schools, across the Emirate of Sharjah.

The aim of the initiative is to protect children and young people from any abuse or harassment online. Sheikha Jawaher stressed the importance of awareness on the different forms of abuse and how parents can protect children from cyber-threats, online harassment and bullying.

Sheikha Jawaher said, “Raising awareness among parents and children on how to safely and properly use the Internet has become of paramount importance, due to the recent and rapid growth of social networking platforms. Our children are our greatest asset and most precious treasure and this MoU will contribute to achieving our goals of protecting them further. It is important that we manage the situation responsibly so that children and young people remain protected from the risks, yet retain the ability to keep pace with developments that allow them to grow their cognitive and intellectual capabilities – via legitimate online resources.”

Titled “Cyber-Safety Initiative for Children,” the MoU was signed at the offices of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and attended by Hanadi Saleh Al Yafei, Head of the Organising Committee for the Child Safety Campaign, and Jamil Ezzo, Director-General of ICDL Arabia.

Cyber-safety for children is officially classified as one of the top priorities by governments in the GCC region; however, according to a study conducted by ICDL Arabia, only 42 per cent of children are willing to inform their parents about cyber-threats or bullying they encounter online. This means that parents and educators must take proactive measures to learn about best practices and to nurture the skills that can guide children to use their digital devices in a responsible manner.

“Trust between children and parents must be established, so that children report any cyber-bullying or online harassment to their parents – without any misguided fear that they are the ones at fault,” said Al Yafei.

According to the MOU, a series of cyber-safety awareness workshops will be conducted in collaboration with the Child Safety Campaign’s partners. These partners have been specifically chosen for their organisations’ proven track record and dedication to the welfare of children and young adults.

The workshops will target the 7-12 and 13-18 age groups, as well as parents, teachers and employees. Each session will focus on the proper and improper forms and practices of Internet usage and will track the signs of harassment and threats, while also detailing how potential victims can react and report such instances. According to the organisers, the educational workshops aim to create a generation that is better informed of the dangers online while also being able to live, work and play safely.



Press Release

As part of the new campaign initiative, informative handbooks will be distributed to participating organisations and educational facilities and will also be promoted on social media. The handbook contains a section called “Tips on Cyber-Safety” – a guide that documents the best practices for safe use of the Internet.