



NEW INSIGHTS INTO
**EFFECTIVE
ONLINE SAFETY
EDUCATION**
EVIDENCE & IMPACT REPORT 2025

RESEARCH FINDINGS



Evidence is powerful. This report delivers the data that proves the Cyber Safety Project program works.

This report summarises the 2024 research findings from a partnership between the Cyber Safety Project and Pivot Professional Learning. Together, we evaluated the teacher-led online safety curriculum with upper primary students across Australian schools, combining Cyber Safety Project's cyber safety expertise with Pivot's educational data analytics.

Here are some of our key findings:

1

Students showed real improvement in their online safety skills, behaviours, and attitudes when taught in school – **proving that classroom-based online safety education works.**

2

The Cyber Safety Project approach was proven to be **well-designed and effective** across year levels, with **measurable positive results** for students.

3

The connection **between students and their teachers** plays a crucial role in how effectively online safety lessons are learned and applied.

TICKS ALL THE BOXES

"Respectful relationships, health, education, cyber safety. All that sort of stuff is... important...we need to be teaching our kids this."

SCHOOL LEADER

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Weekly 45-minute instructional lessons delivered over eight weeks, following a structured curriculum based on four core values of digital citizenship:



RESPONSIBILITY



INTEGRITY



STRENGTH



EMPATHY

PARTICIPANTS

881

STUDENTS

34

TEACHERS

7

SCHOOLS

June 17 -
October 21,
2024

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Cyber Safety Knowledge Quiz

10 questions aligned with
program content

Student Perception Survey

30 items measuring
teaching practice and
online safety knowledge

Student Wellbeing Survey

15 items addressing resilience,
safety and belonging

Post-implementation Interviews

School leaders and
program facilitators

TEACHER PREPARATION WAS KEY

Before starting, all teachers participated in a practical training session and received ongoing support throughout the program. This preparation was key to successful delivery, as **research shows that teachers who feel confident teaching online safety achieve better results with their students.**

SUMMARY OF **KEY FINDINGS**

MEASURABLE IMPACT ACROSS MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

FOR A DEEPER DIVE
VIEW THE FULL REPORT

881

students
empowered
with critical
online safety
skills

94%

of students
applied
integrity skills in
**real-world
scenarios**

more than
half

took
immediate action
to strengthen their
online security

IMPACT
+30.6%



I can create a **long, strong and secure** password.

IMPACT
+14.2%



I know how to protect my **personal information** online.

IMPACT
+5.0%



I understand why it's **not always safe** online.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

"So there was quite a few kids
actually ... making sure their
settings were changed. They're
really putting it into action."

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HELP SEEKING

"I think the kids are just more
aware and more inclined to come
and approach us and let us know
all things that are going on."

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TEACHER SKILLS INTEGRAL TO STUDENT GROWTH

Our data shows that students quickly evaluate a teacher's digital credibility, which significantly impacts their learning outcomes. The research demonstrates that high-retention and behavioural change occur when teachers both exhibit technical competence, and build relationships characterised by respect, care, and trust. Teachers who balance these attributes consistently achieve superior results in student online safety skill development.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

Students quickly assess **a teacher's credibility** on cyber safety topics, and this **directly impacts learning outcomes**. The most effective teachers stayed informed about current online trends and continuously built their digital literacy skills.

OBSERVANT & ATTENTIVE

The most effective teachers were watchful and noticed when students needed support with online challenges. They observed classroom dynamics, recognised signs of digital distress, and created **environments where students felt seen and understood**.

GENUINE CARE

Students rated teachers highest when they felt genuine care and concern for their wellbeing. This **emotional connection** created the foundation for trust that enabled more open discussions about online safety challenges.

REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

The most effective teachers grounded online safety lessons in students' daily experiences. They **connected abstract concepts to real situations** students face, making learning immediately relevant and applicable outside the classroom.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

The most effective teachers provided hands-on, practical guidance when students encountered difficulties. They engaged with the lessons and helped students complete activities in a meaningful way.

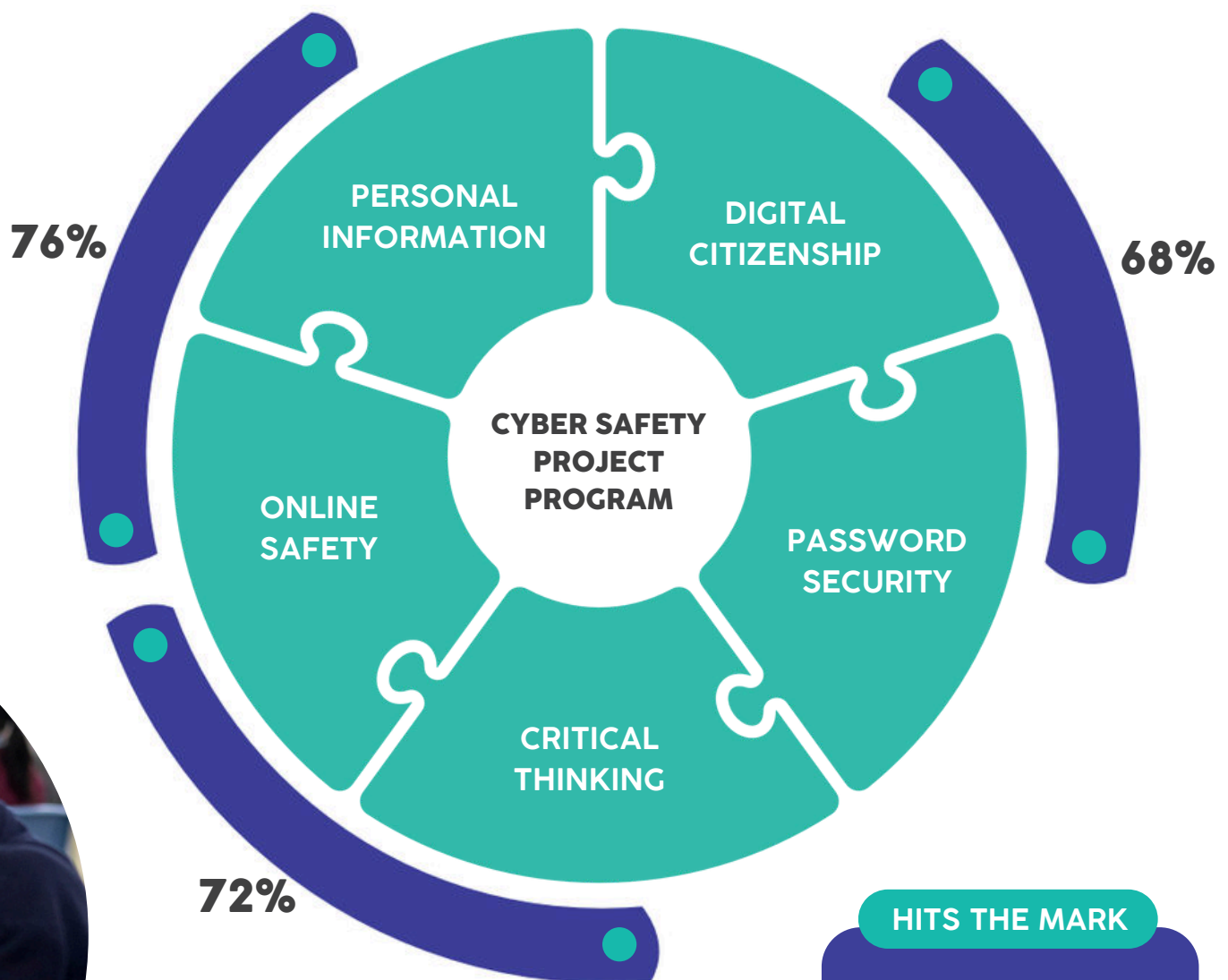


PROGRAM DESIGN & EFFECTIVENESS

The findings confirm the Cyber Safety Project delivers an effective educational framework. The program's five core components work together like interlocking puzzle pieces, creating a comprehensive online safety education system that's both reliable and measurable.

A POWERFUL NETWORK OF CONNECTED SKILLS

The percentages show how strongly two skills are connected when students learn them.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Unlike one-off, isolated safety lessons that quickly fade from memory, the Cyber Safety Program uses multiple exposure to create a **reinforcing network of skills that strengthen each other.**

HITS THE MARK

"The resources and the lessons were well targeted ... well designed and sequenced."

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Based on the research findings, we recommend schools take the following actions to enhance online safety education:

1

FOCUS ON PRACTICAL SKILLS

- Embed hands-on practice for online safety skills
- Prioritise concrete skills, e.g. password creation and information protection
- Provide regular reinforcement for more abstract concepts

2

SUPPORT STUDENT WELLBEING

- Monitor student wellbeing as a component of online safety
- Use wellbeing data to identify at-risk students and implement timely interventions
- Reinforce help-seeking behaviours
- Create environments where students feel comfortable discussing online issues

VISIBLE RESULTS

“The thing I loved about this is that their kids have done the learning, and I've seen a shift ... I could say this to the parents, we have evidence to say that we need to support our children more in this area.”

SCHOOL LEADER



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYSTEM LEADERS

Based on our research findings, we recommend the following actions for education system leaders and policy makers:



1

FOCUS ON UPSKILLING

- Prioritise high-quality online safety education programs
- Seek evidence-based, well-constructed curricula
- Ensure programs provide multiple exposures to key security and safety concepts

2

ENABLE DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES

- Guide schools in using school-specific data to identify unique challenges
- Enable tailored interventions based on school needs

3

BUILD CAPACITY & MAINTAIN FOCUS

- Build teacher capacity and confidence by providing targeted professional development
- Make online safety a permanent agenda item for system leaders

ONGOING

"Cyber safety is something that over years really develops."

SCHOOL LEADER

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