The 5-Minute Digital Privacy Checklist for NZ Parents

A "Sane" guide to securing your teen's digital world in 2026

When bullying or harassment moves online, your teen's phone can feel like a tracking device. Use this checklist to immediately "harden" their privacy and stop the digital trail.

1. The "Ghost" Device Audit

Bullies or ex-partners often stay logged into accounts on old devices.

- [ ] **Google/Gmail:** Go to *Manage your Google Account > Security > Your Devices*. Sign out of anything you don't recognize or no longer use.
- [ ] **iCloud/Apple ID:** Go to *Settings > [Name] >* Scroll down to the device list. Remove any old iPads, MacBooks, or phones.
- [ ] **Meta (Instagram/FB):** Go to *Accounts Center > Password and Security > Where you're logged in*.

2. Neutralizing "Live" Tracking

In 2026, real-time location is the #1 tool for physical harassment.

- [ ] **Snapchat "Ghost Mode":** Open Snap Maps > Settings > Enable *Ghost Mode*.
- [ ] **Photo Metadata:** On iPhone/Android, go to *Settings > Privacy > Location Services > Camera*. Set to "Never" or "Ask Next Time" to stop GPS coordinates from being attached to photos they send.
- [ ] **Find My Sharing:** Check *Find My* (Apple) or *Google Location Sharing*. Ensure they aren't accidentally sharing their live move-to-move location with a "friend" who might be compromised.

3. Evidence Preservation (Don't just delete!)

To use the **Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA),** you need proof.

- [ ] **Capture the "Full Story":** Don't just crop the text. Take a full screen shot that shows the **Date, Time, and Username**.
- [ ] **URL Logging:** If the abuse is on a website or public profile, copy the full URL (e.g., www.instagram.com/user_name).
- [ ] **The "Vault":** Create a hidden, password-protected folder on a computer (not the phone) to save these files so they aren't accidentally deleted in a moment of distress.

4. The "Safe Harbor" Communication Settings

- [ ] **Emergency Bypass:** Go to *Contacts > Parent/Safe Adult > Edit > Ringtone*. Turn on **Emergency Bypass**. This ensures your teens can always hear your call, even if their phone is on "Silent" to avoid bullies.
- [ ] **Silence Unknown Callers:** In Phone Settings, toggle this ON to filter out no-caller-ID harassment.

Next Steps for Your Whānau

If you've ticked these boxes and the harassment is continuing, it's time for a professional **Digital Autonomy Audit**.

We help you navigate the **Netsafe** reporting process, identify "Deepfake" digital harm, and build a case for school intervention under the **Education and Training Act 2020**.