

SUB-MODULE: CYBERSECURITY AND DISINFORMATION-WHEN THINGS GO WRONG-MANAGING CYBERSECURITY CRISES

Case Study: Hacked School Social Media Account

Lakeview Secondary School is a mid-sized public school in a suburban area with a diverse student body and active parent involvement. The school uses its social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to communicate important announcements, celebrate student achievements, and share school events. The accounts are managed by a rotating group of staff members, including teachers and administrative assistants.

Crisis Context

One Friday evening, the school's Facebook page was hacked. The hacker(s) posted several offensive and inappropriate messages, including hateful speech targeting specific student groups, false announcements about school closures and event cancellations, and links to malicious websites. The school community became aware of the situation through concerned students and parents who saw the posts and began sharing them, further amplifying the issue. By the time the school administration was notified, the offensive content had been visible for several hours and had been widely shared. The school's reputation was severely tarnished. Many parents expressed concern about the school's ability to maintain a safe and respectful environment. Students, particularly those targeted by the hateful messages, experienced significant emotional distress and anxiety. At the same time, the false announcements caused confusion and disruption, with many parents and students unsure about the accuracy of school schedules and events.



WORK IN SMALL GROUPS -TASK 1

Participants are asked to work in three different groups, teachers, school leaders, and parents on one or more of the following tasks/questions.

For Teachers:

Prevention:

What specific steps can teachers take to promote responsible social media use among students and prevent them from engaging in activities that could compromise the school's accounts (e.g., sharing login information)?

How can teachers incorporate digital citizenship and cybersecurity awareness into their curriculum to educate students about online risks?

What role can teachers play in monitoring students' online behaviour and identifying potential threats or vulnerabilities?

Effective Management:

If you were the first teacher to become aware of the hacking, what immediate steps would you take?

How can teachers support students who have been affected by the incident, particularly those who were targeted by the offensive messages?

How can teachers help to restore a sense of safety and security in the school environment after such an incident?

For School Leaders:

Prevention:

What policies and procedures should the school have in place to prevent social media account takeovers? (Consider account security, access controls, and staff training.)

How can the school ensure that staff members are adequately trained in social media management best practices and cybersecurity?

What role should the school play in educating parents and students about online safety and responsible social media use?

Effective Management:

What should the school's incident response plan include for a social media hacking incident? (Consider communication strategies, content removal, forensic investigation, and account recovery.)

How should the school communicate with parents, students, staff, and the wider community during and after the incident? What information should be shared, and how should it be delivered?

What legal considerations need to be taken in account?

For Parents:

Prevention:

What steps can parents take to educate their children about online safety and responsible social media use?

How can parents work with the school to reinforce cybersecurity awareness and promote a safe online environment?

What should parents do if they suspect their child has been involved in an incident that compromises the school's cybersecurity?

Effective Management:

How should parents respond to their children if they see the offensive content?

What information should parents expect from the school in the aftermath of such an incident, and how should they communicate their concerns?

How can parents support the school in its efforts to recover from the incident and rebuild trust?



WORK IN SMALL GROUPS -TASK 2

Each group creates a plan for dealing with the crisis.



WORK IN MIXED GROUPS -TASK 3

Mixed groups are created where participants discuss whether they spot common solutions in their plans and discuss how they could collaborate in order to achieve an ecosystemic approach to the crisis.