

Hong Kong Police Force holds multi-disciplinary seminar on Child Sexual Abuse in the Cyber World (with photos)

The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) held a multi-disciplinary seminar on Child Sexual Abuse in the Cyber World today (March 21). Experts and representatives from relevant sectors jointly explored how to more effectively protect children from online sexual threats from multiple perspectives.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Siu Chak-ye, stated that the number of technology crimes recorded by Police increased from 6 778 cases in 2014 to 34 112 cases in 2023, accounting for more than 35 per cent of overall crimes, representing a nearly five-fold increase.

In recent years, there have been more and more cases of children being sexually blackmailed, defrauded, and even sexually assaulted by online acquaintances. According to an analysis, last year, more than 900 cases involving "naked chat blackmail" and "compensated dating scams" targeted students, accounting for 20 per cent of these two types of cases. In addition, sexual abuse cases related to children's online activities are also on the rise, with the youngest victim in a case last year being only nine years old.

Mr Siu further pointed out that children can no longer be separated from the Internet nowadays. While they learn, entertain and make friends online, they may inadvertently fall into danger, and the consequences may affect their entire lives. To effectively help children prevent and combat online sexual threats, all sectors of society need to work together, understand the overall situation from multiple perspectives, and solve problems with a multi-disciplinary approach.

He added that to target various types of technology crimes, the HKPF has been allocating a lot of resources and has introduced a number of measures, including the "CyberDefender.hk" website, "Scameter", "Child Protection Web Application", and various crime prevention comic books and animations suitable for children.

At the seminar, parenting expert Dr Agnes Meiling Kaneko Chan, together with pediatricians Professor Patrick Ip Pak-keung and Dr Anita Tsang Man-ching, secondary school principal Mr Wong Ting-hong, social worker of Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups Mr Eric Chu Heung-hung, as well as representatives from the Education Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Department of Justice, and the HKPF, conducted in-depth discussions from different perspectives. Topics included international trends in online sexual abuse against children, reasons why children fall into online sexual traps, patterns of offenders and related cases, as well as early intervention advice. Suggestions for preventing, identifying, and handling related crises were provided.

This seminar provided a platform for professionals from various fields to exchange ideas, aiming to raise their awareness and ability to respond to the threat of online sexual abuse. At the same time, the seminar also promoted collaboration among different professions, enabling them to work together to protect the safety and well-being of children. Over 500 police officers, parents, principals, teachers, social workers, and child-related workers participated simultaneously online and offline.

Today's seminar marks the successful conclusion of a series of activities of the "Let's T.A.L.K." Child Protection Campaign organised by the HKPF for the third year. For more information about the Child Protection Campaign of the HKPF, please visit the one-stop child protection online platform (www.childprotection.gov.hk).

