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When Clicks Matter More Than Children - Where Is Our Conscience?

The Content Forum calls for compassion and restraint in cases involving children, urging media and online users to protect dignity over virality.

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is deeply concerned by the recent media and social media coverage of the tragic cases involving children in schools, including reports on cases of rape and murder. The way these stories have been reported, discussed, and circulated raises serious ethical, legal, and moral questions that cannot be ignored.

The circulation of graphic photographs and videos is particularly distressing and wholly unnecessary - such visuals do not inform the public, they only inflict further harm and trauma.

"These are not just stories. These are children - victims, perpetrators, and witnesses - all deserving of dignity, privacy, and protection. Every photograph shared, every unverified claim posted, and every speculative commentary about motives or mental health risks compounding their trauma and that of their families," said **Mediha Mahmood, CEO of the Content Forum**.

Under Malaysian law - including the Child Act 2001, Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017, and the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 - the identities of minors must be protected. Publishing names, photos, school details, or any information that could lead to their identification is not just unethical; it may be unlawful.

The Content Code, enforced under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, also makes clear that content must *never exploit, sensationalise, or stigmatise*.

Key Ethical Reminders for All Content Producers and Distributors

1. **Protect the child's identity.** No names, photos, uniforms, or identifiable details - even if these have already appeared elsewhere. Amplification is also harm.
2. **Avoid speculation.** Do not publish or discuss unverified motives, mental health status, or personal histories unless confirmed by authorities - and even then, exercise utmost discretion to prevent further harm.
3. **Refrain from using graphic visuals or descriptions.** Sensational details retraumatise victims and their families and distort public empathy.
4. **Be mindful of headlines and hashtags.** Children should never be reduced to clickbait or trending topics.
5. **Remember the "digital echo."** Once content is shared, it multiplies beyond control. Pause before reposting.
6. **Uphold compassion and restraint.** Ethical reporting does not silence facts — it gives them context, humanity, and respect.

Beyond the Newsroom

This call extends beyond traditional media. Every user with a smartphone and an account has the power to either protect or endanger a child's dignity. Posting, forwarding, or commenting recklessly makes one part of the harm, not the awareness.

The Content Forum urges everyone - journalists, editors, influencers, parents, educators, and online users - to exercise social responsibility and self-regulation. **Freedom of expression carries moral weight, and in times like these, silence, restraint, and empathy can be far louder than sensationalism.**

When the story involves a child, sensitivity is not censorship, it is humanity.

For reference, the Content Code and its provisions on reporting involving minors and victims of sexual offences are available at www.contentforum.my.

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UNTUK SIARAN SEGERA

Apabila Klik Lebih Penting Daripada Kanak-kanak - Di Mana Hati Nurani Kita?

CMCF menyeru semua pihak agar mengutamakan belas ihsan dan kawalan sendiri dalam melaporkan kes yang melibatkan kanak-kanak, dengan menekankan empati melebihi ketularan.

Forum Kandungan Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (CMCF) memandang serius laporan media dan perbincangan di media sosial berhubung kes tragik yang melibatkan kanak-kanak di sekolah, termasuk laporan berkaitan kes rogol dan pembunuhan. Cara insiden-insiden ini dilaporkan, dibincangkan, dan disebarakan menimbulkan persoalan besar dari segi etika, undang-undang, serta nilai kemanusiaan yang tidak boleh diabaikan.

Penyebaran gambar dan video yang bersifat grafik amat membimbangkan dan sama sekali tidak wajar - visual sebegini tidak memberi maklumat kepada orang ramai, sebaliknya menambah luka dan trauma kepada mereka yang terlibat.

“Ini bukan sekadar berita. Ini adalah kanak-kanak - sama ada mangsa, pelaku atau saksi - semuanya berhak dilindungi, dihormati dan dijaga maruah mereka. Setiap gambar yang dikongsi, setiap dakwaan yang tidak disahkan, dan setiap spekulasi mengenai motif atau keadaan mental hanya menambah trauma kepada mereka serta keluarga yang terkesan,” kata **Mediha Mahmood, Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif CMCF**.

Di bawah undang-undang Malaysia — termasuk Akta Kanak-Kanak 2001, Akta Kesalahan Seksual Terhadap Kanak-Kanak 2017, dan Akta Komunikasi dan Multimedia 1998 — identiti kanak-kanak mesti dilindungi. Penerbitan nama, gambar, butiran sekolah atau sebarang maklumat yang boleh membawa kepada pengecaman bukan sahaja tidak beretika, malah boleh menyalahi undang-undang.

Kod Kandungan, yang dikuatkuasakan di bawah Akta Komunikasi dan Multimedia 1998, turut memperjelaskan bahawa kandungan *tidak boleh bersifat eksploitasi, sensasi, atau membawa stigma terhadap mana-mana pihak*.

Peringatan Etika Penting Untuk Semua Penerbit dan Penggiat Kandungan

1. **Lindungi identiti kanak-kanak.** Jangan siarkan nama, gambar, pakaian seragam atau maklumat pengenalan - walaupun ia telah tular di tempat lain. Menyebarakan semula tetap membawa mudarat.
2. **Elakkan spekulasi.** Jangan siarkan atau bincangkan motif, keadaan mental, atau latar peribadi tanpa pengesahan pihak berkuasa - dan walaupun telah disahkan, gunakan budi bicara yang tertinggi untuk mengelakkan mudarat lanjut.
3. **Jangan guna visual atau perincian yang keterlaluan.** Unsur grafik atau sensasi hanya menambah trauma kepada mangsa dan keluarga serta boleh memesongkan empati masyarakat.

4. **Berhati-hati dengan tajuk dan hashtag.** Kanak-kanak tidak seharusnya dijadikan umpan klik atau topik tular.
5. **Ingat kesan ‘gema digital’.** Setelah kandungan dikongsi, ia boleh tersebar tanpa kawalan. Fikir dahulu sebelum kongsi semula.
6. **Utamakan belas ihsan dan kawalan sendiri.** Laporan beretika tidak menyembunyikan fakta - ia memberi konteks, kemanusiaan, dan penghormatan kepada semua pihak terlibat.

Di Luar Ruang Bilik Berita

Seruan ini tidak terhad kepada media arus perdana semata-mata. Setiap pengguna telefon pintar yang mempunyai akaun di media sosial mempunyai kuasa sama ada untuk melindungi atau memudaratkan kanak-kanak. Menyiarkan, mengulang kongsi atau memberi komen tanpa pertimbangan menjadikan seseorang sebahagian daripada masalah, bukan penyelesaian.

CMCF menyeru semua pihak - termasuk wartawan, editor, pempengaruh, ibu bapa, pendidik, dan pengguna dalam talian - untuk mengamalkan tanggungjawab sosial dan kawalselia sendiri. **Kebebasan bersuara datang bersama amanah moral, dan dalam keadaan sebegini, berdiam diri, kawalan sendiri, dan empati boleh bergema lebih kuat daripada sensasi.**

Apabila cerita melibatkan kanak-kanak, sensitiviti bukanlah satu bentuk penapisan - ia adalah lambang kemanusiaan.

Untuk rujukan, Kod Kandungan serta peruntukan berkaitan liputan yang melibatkan kanak-kanak dan mangsa kesalahan seksual boleh didapati di www.contentforum.my.

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ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an industry forum registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA'98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players in the content industry, i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting service providers, internet service providers, and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to governing and promoting the creation, distribution, and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers, and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code ("the Content Code"). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders, and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts complaints from industry players and the general public. Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.



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