

Cyber Safety For Parents



With the advent of the Internet, good and bad information is available with just the click of a mouse. Kids spend a lot of time online, e-mailing, blogging, chatting and instant messaging. All of these great tools can have dangerous consequences if they are not used wisely! Children who are growing up in this digital age are being targeted by online predators at an alarmingly high rate. This handout will provide you with resources and tools to help kids learn how to protect themselves while enjoying all of the benefits of the Internet.

Some quick facts:

53% of teens enter chat rooms and 85% of teens use Instant Messaging.

1 in 5 children between the ages 10-17 have been sexually solicited online. In 15% of those cases, the predator attempted to meet the child in person.

89% of sexual solicitations of kids were made in chat rooms or Instant Messages.

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys were sexually exploited before they reach adulthood.

What is Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.” This generally occurs through the use of computers and the Internet, as bullies can send harassing e-mails or instant messages, post obscene, insulting, and slanderous messages to online bulletin boards or social networking sites (like MySpace, Friendster, Orkut, and Facebook), or develop Web sites to promote and disseminate defamatory content. Harassing text messages also can be sent to a victim via cellular phones.

In terms of proactive and reactive responses, the Internet is replete with safety tips to instruct parents whose children frequently are online. In addition, software is available for adults to install on home computers to filter web content for adolescent users. Neither of these measures, however, are completely successful in protecting youth from online victimization, nor are they as effective as parent’s supervision of (or involvement in) their children’s online activities.

Research has identified the importance of ongoing discussions between parents, caregivers, or teachers and children about online interactions. As such, we have created sample “scripts” between a parent and a teenager to encourage cyber bullying-related conversations. We hope they are useful in encouraging parents to discuss this important issue with their web-using teens.

10 Things Parents Can Do...

1. Talk with your child about the potential dangers of Internet activities. Tell them you have a responsibility to monitor their Internet use and will check their accounts periodically.
2. Spend time with your child on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite websites.
3. Keep the computer in a common room in your home, and set time limits for its use.
4. Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software. Make sure they know what sites they are not allowed to visit.
5. Always maintain access to your child's online account and randomly check his/her email. This means that you must have your child's password. Do not allow them to have multiple email accounts. Be up front with your child about your access and reasons why.
6. Install an operating system that makes you the administrator of the family computer. This allows you to set what content can be viewed online, and software that can be installed.
7. Tell your children to let you know immediately if a stranger tries to make contact with them on the web.
8. Make sure your child knows what online activities are against the law. Illegal activities include making threats against someone else online, hacking, downloading pirated software, creating bootlegged software, sharing music files online, and for children under age 18, making online purchases.
9. Go online with your kids and find out who they send Instant Messages to and/or chat with. Do not allow your children to send Instant Messages during homework-related computer time.
10. Instruct your children:
 - A. To never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met online;
 - B. To never upload or post pictures of themselves onto the internet or online service to people they do not personally know;
 - C. To never give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number;
 - D. To never download pictures from an unknown source, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit photos;
 - E. To never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing;
 - F. That what ever they are told on-line may or may not be true.

Internet Safety Guide for Parents to Share with their Kids:

1. E-mail makes it easy to stay in touch with friends and family. Make sure you don't respond to emails from people you don't know.
2. Tell a parent, teacher or trusted adult if you see anything on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable.
3. Never give out personal information to someone you meet online. This includes your real name, address, telephone number or the school you attend. Only use your member name or e-mail address when chatting.
4. Don't open files attached to e-mails from someone you don't know. They could contain a computer virus or material that could make you feel uncomfortable.
5. No one should ever ask you to keep secrets from your parents. If someone you meet online asks you to keep a secret from them, tell your parents right away.
6. Remember that everything you write on the Internet is public information and can be read by anyone online.
7. Don't post any photos of yourself, friends or family online. Predators can edit and repost those pictures on inappropriate Internet sites.
8. Cyber pals are strangers. Never agree to get together with someone you meet online. Make sure to tell your parents, teacher or trusted adult if someone asks you to meet them.
9. Don't use rude and offensive language.
10. If you visit a website that requires you to provide personal information, ask your parents first.
11. Do not purchase anything online without consulting your parents.
12. Don't accept gifts, such as toys or money, from someone you meet online. The person may be trying to trick you into giving your personal information. Always tell your parents if someone you don't know offers you gifts.
13. Avoid spamming. This is when you send out a large amount of junk e-mails or forwarded e-mails.
14. Be careful when using humor online because people don't always get it or might find it offensive.
15. Keep in mind that you cannot hear people or see people you are talking to online. Therefore, it is easy for someone to lie about who they are, how old they are or where they are.

Parental Guides to the Internet:

www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/internet/

A how to use the Internet site. It has an extensive glossary with parental tips.

www.learnthenet.com

Available in English, Spanish or French. It has weekly teaching articles and course.

www.webopedia.com

An online dictionary and search engine for Internet information.

www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/expertzone/columns/bownam/02june03.asp

(Online safety - Internet , Instant messaging and Chat rooms) Step by step procedures how to set parental controls on Windows XP and internet options.

www.wiredsafetv.org

An Internet safety help group

www.lada.tv

(computer cop)

www.software4parents.com

Offering all types of spyware and computer software

Parental Guides to Safe Internet Sites for Children:

www.getnetwise.org

A public service site designed to help you make informed decisions about internet usage

www.sitesforparents.com

A listing of sites for safe games and school subject research

www.surfnetkids.com

Covers school topics for parents and children

www.cvbercitizenship.org

Educates children and adults about cyber crime

www.loc.gov

A link to the Library of Congress

www.micorsoft.com/INFO/safeonlinedefault.htm

Software sales

www.safekids.com/parent_guidelines.htm

A site dedicated to online safety

Online Safety Websites

www.netsmartz.org

www.safekids.com

www.livewwwires.com

www.webwisekids.com

www.wiredkids.org

www.wiredsafety.org

www.familyfirst.net

www.fbi.org

www.internetsuperheroes.org

www.cyberangels.org

www.safeteens.com

www.disney.go.com/surfswell

www.internet-safety.org

www.stopcyberbullying.org

www.missingkids.com

<http://da.co.la.ca.us/pok/im.htm>

Cyber 911 to report online emergencies

Instant Message Vocabulary:

bbwl = "Be back with love"

brb = "Be right back"

hbu = "How 'bout you?"

pos = "Parent over shoulder"

lylas = "Love ya like a sister"

jc = "Just Chillin"

jk = "Just Kidding"

w/e = "Whatever"

bbi = "Be back later"

lmao = "Laugh my ass off"

lu = "Love you"

O = "Oh"

jst = "Just"

nvr = "Never"

sup = "What's up"

omg = "Oh my god"

fone = "Phone"

sat = "Saturday"

tmrw = "Tomorrow"

be = "Bye"

evry = "Every"

hay baby = "Greeting to familiar friend / boyfriend"

musm = "Miss you so much"

guyz = "Guys"

bro = "Brother"

is = "Is"

s/u = "Shut Up"

hek yea = "Heck yes"

pleez = "Please"

i no = "I know"

idk = "I don't know"

there = "They are or They're"

b/c = "Because"

bcuz = "Because"

cuz = "Because"

C = "See"

ttml = "Talk to me later"

ttul = "Talk to you later"

stil = "Still"

h/o = "Hold on"

neway = "Anyway"

lyl = "Love ya lots"

sn = "Screen name"

w/o = "Without"

hey hun = "Greeting to familiar friend / boyfriend"

nmjc = "Nothin much just chillin"

l2m = "Listening to music"

bbml = "Be back much later"

sos = "Same old stuff"

ttyl = "Talk to ya later"

jw = "Just wondering"

jp = "Just playing"

shuld = "Should"

bbs = "Be back soon"

lol = "Laugh out loud"

ilu = "I love you"

K = "okay"

kk = "okay"

l8a = "Later"

l8r = "Later"

gurl = "Girl"

grl = "Girl"

kewl = "Cool"

sry = "Sorry"

dat = "That"

hav = "Have"

nothing = "Anything"

keedokey = "Okay"

f2f = "Face to Face"

The Safe - Surfing Contract - Our Agreement About Using the Internet

I want to use the Internet. I know that there are certain rules about what I should do online. I agree to follow these rules and my parents agree to help me follow these rules:

1. I will not give my name, address, telephone number, school, or my parents' names, addresses, or telephone numbers, or anything else that would help anyone find me offline (like the name of my sports team) to anyone I meet on the computer.
2. I understand that some people online pretend to be someone else. Sometimes they pretend to be kids, when they're really grown-ups. I will tell my parents about people I meet online. I will also tell my parents before I answer any e-mails or instant messages I get from, or send e-mail or instant messages to, new people I meet online.
3. I will not buy or order anything online or give out any credit card information without asking my parents.
4. I will not fill out any form online that asks me for any information about myself or my family, without asking my parents first. This includes forms for contests or registering at a site. I'll also check to see if the sites have a privacy policy and if they promise to keep my private information private. If they don't promise to keep my private information private, I won't give them any private information.
5. I will not get into arguments or fights online. If someone tries to start an argument or fight with me, I won't answer him or her and will tell my parents.
6. If I see something I do not like or that makes me uncomfortable or that I know my parents don't want me to see, I will click on the "Back" button or log off.
7. If I see people doing things or saying things to other kids online I know they're not supposed to or say, I'll tell my parents.
8. I won't keep online secrets from my parents.
9. If someone sends me any pictures, links to sites I know I shouldn't be going to, or any e-mail or instant messaging using bad language, I will tell my parents.
10. If someone asks me to do something I am not supposed to do, I will tell my parents.
11. I will not call anyone I met online unless my parents say it's OK. (Even then I will block caller ID on my phone.)
12. I will never meet in person anyone I met online, unless my parents say it's OK and they are with me.
13. I will never send anything to anyone I met online, unless my parents say it's OK.
14. If anyone I met online sends me anything, I will tell my parents.
15. I won't say bad things about people online, and I will practice good Netiquette.
16. I won't use bad language online or threaten anyone, even if I'm only kidding.
17. I know that my parents want to make sure I'm safe online, and I will listen to them when they ask me not to do something.
18. I will help teach my parents more about computers and the Internet.
19. I will tell my parents when something bad happens online, because they promise not to overreact if something bad happens online. And I will remember that it's not my fault if others do bad things online!

Signed by Child / Teen

Signed by parent / guardian