

# **INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR FAMILIES**

## **(ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)**

The Internet offers a world of resources and poses a variety of dangers for our youth, such as: viruses that could harm your computer; pedophiles that are trying to meet your child; disclosing personal information that could lead to identity theft; and cyber-bullying. Every parent must recognize these dangers in order to help their child learn to protect his/her self-online. The following are some safety tips for parents of elementary students who use the Internet.

### ***Safety Tips***

- Since you may not always be able to watch everything your child does on the computer, most experts recommend installing monitoring software to ensure that you know exactly what your children are doing online.
- Place the computer in a common area. It is suggested that your child not have computer in his or her room, or at least no Internet access.
- Learn to use the Internet yourself. Experience cyberspace with your child and learn how to check the computer's "History" to see what websites your child is visiting.

### **Tips for youth to stop cyber-bullying:**

- Don't initiate, respond or forward harmful messages.
- Think first! If something mean is posted or texted about you, don't respond immediately. Take a break and give yourself time to think through your next step.
- Think about your reputation--would you want your grandma, teacher, future employer or someone you don't know, to see your post?
- Trust your gut. If you feel uncomfortable, save the message and tell an adult.

### **Tips for parents regarding cyber-bullying:**

- Ask your children questions. Maintain an open dialogue.
- Keep the computer in a common room.
- Talk about your expectations regarding acceptable online/phone behavior before they receive the privilege. Behavior online should be the same as what you would do in person or in front of someone you respect.
- Make agreements and set boundaries about accepted use and behavior for online/phone communication. Often youth don't tell parents because they fear losing their technology privileges.
- Help your child think through how the information they put online reflects on them.
- Inform youth about legal and future consequences of harmful posing online or by phone.

- Ask your child to teach you about programs or technologies you don't understand or of which you don't have familiarity.
- Model the behaviors you want to see around phone and internet use.

**Talk to your child about the dangers online.**

**Your child should know that:**

- Accepting files or downloads from unknown sources can bring a virus that could harm the computer.
- Giving away personal information can lead to identity theft or worse.
- People may not be who they say they are online. (Predators roam cyberspace.)
- It is important to keep passwords private.
- Open communication with your child is vital. Your child needs to feel they can come to you if they encounter frightening communications or images without fear of losing Internet privileges.

**If you have a webcam, your child should use it ONLY if you are present.**

Posting pictures online or sending images can have dangerous consequences. Parents *must* control such activity.

**Note to Parents:** There are many organizations and activities in which your child may be involved that post information online in public locations. It is extremely important for you to pre-approve any information about your child that will be posted for the world to see. Remember, cyber predators are looking too.

**TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THE FOLLOWING RULES:**

- **Never accept files or downloads from unknown sources. This includes familiar sources if you were not expecting them.**
- **Choose an email address/ screen name that DOES NOT contain any part of your name, age, gender, interests or favorite activities.**
- **Do NOT fill out a profile without parent review and approval.**
- **NEVER give out real name, telephone or cell phone number(s), mailing address, or passwords.**
- **Do NOT enter chat rooms.**
- **Do NOT post photographs in publicly accessible sites.**
- **The settings for ANY social networking profiles\* should be PRIVATE, and new friends are accepted only if they are known to the child AND parent.**

**\*Social networking sites include: FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.**

## **INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS**

### **SOME ONLINE BEHAVIORS ARE AGAINST THE LAW...**

Many view piracy and plagiarism as stealing. Illegal downloading of movies and music can have serious consequences. Just as stealing a CD or DVD from a store is wrong, so is stealing online.

There is an area of the law called Intellectual Properties. Learn about it. Copying information from the Internet can be illegal and there are risks.

### **PROTECTING YOUR COMPUTER**

**Emails from unknown sources** may contain attachments that introduce viruses that permanently damage your computer. Forwarding emails from unknown sources can reveal your friend's email address to the sender and possibly infect your friend's computer with a virus.

**File sharing** can lead to a virus or provide access to information contained on your hard drive.

**Installing a firewall** can help protect your computer from the problems created by hackers.

**Anti-Virus software** can help protect your files.

**Disconnecting your Internet when not in use** is the best way to prevent anyone from using the Internet's "two way street" to get into your computer.

**Posting your email address on public sites** allows spammers to find it and send you junk mail.

**Remember: Your first and best line of defense is self-defense in cyberspace.**

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