

Internet Safety

The Internet is a valuable tool for students to assist with their coursework and explore various topics from sports to movies. While exploring the Internet, young people may place themselves in danger. It is possible to “meet” many strangers on the Internet and to engage in dialogue with them. As in life, not everyone on the Internet is the person they portray themselves to be.

Your child may create a personalized page or website to communicate with young people with similar interests. Frequently, young people reveal a great deal about themselves on their website and/or through the dialogue they have with “strangers” on the Internet. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and other similar sites attempt to limit the site to only persons of 13 years of age or older. However, there is no real way to determine age on the Internet.

Obviously, there may be unscrupulous persons searching the Internet and attempting to contact young people for the wrong reasons. As a parent, you need to know what sites your child visits. You also need to know with whom your child is conversing over the Internet.

This technology has created new types of crime, new ways to victimize young people and new addictions that were not present in the past. Young people may become involved in illegal activities through contacts on the Internet. Pedophiles may attempt to arrange meetings with your child using Internet conversations and pretending to be a young person. Young people may find, explore and become addicted to visiting pornographic sites.

Should you believe your child might be involved in unhealthy activities as a result of using the Internet, there is help available. School counselors, local safety forces, and state and national agencies have made resources available to help parents ensure the safety of their children. If you believe your child may be utilizing the Internet for the wrong reasons, there are initial steps you can take:

- Install monitoring software on your home computers that track the sites your child explores
- Install software that blocks sites to which you do not want your child exposed
- Cancel or limit Internet service
- Seek professional psychological help for a child that appears to suffer from an Internet-related condition.
- [Click here to find great resources about online safety for adults and kids.](#)