

Internet Safety

The Internet is an amazing tool and can connect your family to many resources and allow you to communicate freely. However, there are risks when children have access to the Internet. Keep communication open between parents and children – talk often about the Internet. Set clear rules for Internet use.

Keep some **important points** in mind:

- Online information is usually not private
- Anyone can put information on line – you cannot always trust it to be accurate
- People on line may not be who they say they are
- You may inadvertently encounter inappropriate material on line with obscene, racist, pornographic or violent content.

Here are some tips for your child's **safety**

- NEVER give out personal information without parents' OK
- NEVER share passwords with anyone, including friends
- NEVER *ever* meet someone from the internet without parents' OK
- NEVER respond to messages that make you feel uncomfortable. Tell an adult right away

The Internet allows people to talk more freely than they might in a face-to-face conversation. Be careful about what you say on line – it can be copied, forwarded, or misinterpreted. NEVER send mean messages. Bullying is wrong, on line or in person! NEVER use the Internet to make someone look bad.

The Internet is a wonderful research tool for school papers and projects. Be careful not to plagiarize, just as you would with written sources.

Parents should **set standards** when determining how the Internet will be used at home.

- Computers should NEVER be in an area where a child or teen can use them behind closed doors. Keep the computer where you can monitor your child's usage.
- Use tracking software and check where your child has been on the web.
- Use blocking software or services that filter offensive material, especially for children under 15.
- Check out the Internet policy at your child's school.
- **LIMIT THE TIME YOUR CHILD SPENDS ON THE COMPUTER** (and TV or video games) to no more than 1-2 hours per day

If you or your child comes across anything threatening or illegal, report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline at 800-THE-LOST or visit www.cybertipline.com.

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