

Internet Safety Tips & Resources

Why Internet Safety Matters

With the end of school approaching, many students will be spending even more time online. Kids today can go online from many different devices, including gaming devices and cell phones. It is important that during this time online, students are staying safe and responsible while using the Internet. With parental guidance, you can help provide your child with a safe and fun environment. The tips, strategies, and resources provided here will help in creating that environment.

Internet Safety Tips for Students:

- **DO** keep passwords private (except to parents).
- **DO** tell a trusted adult immediately if someone online harasses you.
- **DO** spend more time with real-life friends than virtual friends.
- **DO NOT** share names, schools, ages, phone numbers, or addresses with someone online.
- **DO NOT** send pictures to strangers or view pictures that a stranger sends to you.
- **DO NOT** open an email or download attachments from a stranger- it may contain viruses that can harm your computer.
- **DO NOT** fill out any entry forms to win free stuff unless you have permission from your parents.
- **DO NOT** go to meet someone you don't already know in real life.

Strategies for Responsible and Safer Online Fun

- **Visit only age-appropriate sites.** Check out the site before your child visits it. Know what features and content exist and make sure they are age-appropriate.
- **Search safely.** Use safe search settings for young kids or think about applying filtering software to limit inappropriate exposure. And you can always check browser histories to see where your kids have been online.
- **Avoid strangers.** Tell kids that people aren't always who they say they are. Explain that if someone they don't know talks to them, they shouldn't respond and should let you know right away.
- **Be a good cyber citizen!** If they wouldn't do something in real life, they shouldn't do it online. Find out how your child can report mean behavior or unkind content on their favorite sites and teach them how to do it.
- **Keep the computer in a central place.** So you can see what is going on while your child is on the Internet.
- **Have some rules.** Establish expectations and limits about the amount of time your child spends online and what they do.
- **View your own habits carefully.** Parents are role models for safe and smart Internet use.
- **But, mostly, be involved and have fun with them!** Keeping kids safe and teaching them how to use technology responsibly is all about staying involved.

Establish Media Guidelines

- Set time limits and stick to them. Experts recommend no more than one to two hours a day of screen time.
- Check content and ratings in advance to choose media that is age-appropriate.
- Keep media out of kids' bedrooms. Locate technology in a central place where it can be supervised.
- Make a NO media rule during meal times, while doing homework, and before bedtime.
- Consider using parental controls or filtering software.
- Get kids into the habit of asking permission to use media.
- Make sure babysitters and other caregivers know your media guidelines.
- Turn the computer off and get kids to read, exercise, or play every day for the same amount of time they spend using media.

Internet Resources

All Safe Sites- www.allsafesites.com

Kid Sites- www.kidsites.com

Kid Rex Search Engine- www.kidrex.org

Great Websites for Kids- gws.ala.org

NetSmartz Kids- www.netsmartzkids.org

Thinkuknow- www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Chatdanger- www.chatdanger.com

Kidsmart- www.kidsmart.org.uk

OnGuard Online- onguardonline.gov

PBS Kids- pbskids.org/webonauts

Internet Security and Password Tips

- **Protect yourself – and your stuff – with strong passwords.** Strong passwords are a key defense against unauthorized access to your information.
- **Know the difference between information worth sharing and private information.** There are many ways to share your ideas and creativity online, but personal information should remain private. Never enter personal identify information in order to download something.
- **Be very careful with what you download.** Do not download games and videos to your computer. These downloads can contain viruses that harm your computer.
- **Maintain anti-virus software.** You can reduce your risk of someone damaging your network and computer by installing anti-virus software.
- **Restrict access to your wireless network.** Set a required password and only allow authorized users to access your wireless network.

Strong passwords are a key defense against unauthorized access to your information. When creating passwords, **do not** use a password that is easy to guess, contains private information, or common words or phrases. **Do** use combinations of letters, numbers, and symbols when creating online passwords. You can also include spaces to create an even stronger password. To keep strong passwords effective, remember to change them often and to not use the same password for everything. If you feel you must write down your password to remember it, make sure you do not label it as your password and keep it in a safe place.