



Counselors' Corner

November 2014

Internet Safety Information for Parents

Parental involvement and supervision of your children's daily lives is just as important "on line" as in the "real world." Get to know the internet sites and services your children use to alert you to any potential problems that may occur with their use. Spend time with your child while they are online and find out if they have a free web-based email account and if they are using social networking sites.

If you are concerned about your children's online activities, talk to them and seek out the help of school counselors or other professionals. If your child confides in you about viewing inappropriate material or violating one of the safety rules, try not to overreact. It is best to work with your child to learn from what happened and to keep it from happening again. How you respond will determine if they go to you for help in the future. Learning to make good choices on the internet can help young people develop important life skills for future decisions they will face.

Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your children to minimize any potential risks of being online. Discuss the rules with your child and post them near the computer. Some important rules to discuss include:

- Never give out personal information such as your name, home address, telephone number, school name, or anything about your family in a public message or while playing on line games. Never send a picture of yourself to someone you don't know.
- Never open an e-mail message or an attachment from someone you don't know or if they seem odd or unexpected from someone you do know.
- Never meet in person with a stranger you meet online. People online may not be who they say they are. Remember that while playing on line games many players are strangers if you do not know the person in real life. If someone asks to meet you, tell an adult you trust right away.

- If you read or see anything on the Internet that scares you or makes you uncomfortable, tell an adult you trust.
- Remember that everything you read online may not be true. Be very careful about any offers that sound too good to be true.
- Set reasonable rules for the amount of time your children spend on the computer. On line time should not replace time spent with friends in real life. Excessive use of the internet could signal potential problems.
- Set family rules covering the use of cell phones, texting, internet and social media sites that include allowable sites and activities.
- Keep televisions and internet accessible devices out of children's bedrooms.

During the month of November Internet Safety will be taught to all 4th- 8th graders as part of our Guidance Curriculum. There are many books and internet sites available that are excellent resources to help you make informed decisions about your child's internet use.

Web Sites:

<http://www.getnetwise.org>
<http://www.wiredkids.org>
<http://www.netsmartz.org>
<http://www.enough.org>
<http://www.mysecurecyberspace.org>
<http://www.netlingo.com>
<http://www.netmom.com>

BOOKS:

Kids Online by Donna Rice Hughes
Generation Text by Dr. Michael Osit
What Do I Say to My Net-Savvy Kids? by Andelina Khoo

For further details or information contact your child's guidance counselor:

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