

Internet Safety

Guidelines for Parents

- Become computer literate; get to know the services your child uses. Find out what types of information are offered and whether there are built-in ways to block out objectionable material.
- Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name if your service allows it. Steer away from online profiles. Pedophiles often use profiles as a means to find victims.
- Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without your permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the child's first meeting in a public place and accompany your child to the meeting.
- Do not allow your child to respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening. Forward a copy of such messages to your Internet service provider.
- Call [NCMEC](http://www.ncmec.org) at 1-800-843-5678 if you are aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography online.
- Never give out your address, telephone #, work # or child's school name.
- Keep the computer in your family room where you can watch and monitor your child's activities.
- Share an E-mail account with your child so that you can oversee his/ her mail.
- Spend as much time as possible online together to show your children proper behavior and rules.
- Do not allow your children to go into private chat rooms without you being present.
- Monitor your credit card bill. Many pornographic Internet sites require credit card payments in order to gain access.
- Consider using an online service that has special child accounts with restricted access to chat rooms and the Internet.

More guidelines can be found at www.ftc.gov and www.ncpc.org.

SAFETY TIPS FOR TEENS

- Don't give out personal information about your family situation, school, telephone number or address.
- If you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678.
- When "chatting" in chat rooms, remember that not everyone is who they say they are, for example a person who says "she" is a 14-year-old girl from New York may be a 42-year-old man from California.
- If someone harasses you online, says anything inappropriate, or does anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, contact your Internet service provider (ISP).
- Know that there are rules many ISP's have about online behavior. If you violate these rules, your ISP may give you a "time out" and disable your account either temporarily or permanently.
- Consider volunteering at your local library, school, or Boys and Girls Club to help younger children online. Many schools and nonprofit organizations are in need of people to help set up their computer and Internet capabilities.
- If you are having problems at home, with your friends, or at school, a friend you have met online may not be the best person to talk with. Covenant House is a good place to call at 1-800-999-9999. They are able to provide counseling, refer you to a local shelter, assist with the police, and serve as mediators in calling your parents.
- If you are thinking of running away, call the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000, instead of talking to friends online. Although some of your online friends may seem to listen to you, the Switchboard will be able to give you answers to some of your questions about what to do when you are depressed, abused, or thinking about running away.

SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

- Do not give personal information such as your address, telephone numbers, parents work address or phone numbers, or the name and location of your school.
- Tell your parents if something that you come across online makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never agree to get together with someone you “meet” online without your parent’s permission. If your parents agree to the meeting, be sure the meeting is in a public place and that you bring them along.
- Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. Give a copy of such messages to your parents and have them forward it to your ISP.
- Never send pictures of yourself or any other personal material to a friend you meet online without telling your parents first.
- Follow the rules that your parents set for Internet use.
- If you find yourself in an “adult only” area, LEAVE.

PREVENTION METHODS FOR INTERNET SAFETY

- According to Kathy Free, Program Manager for the Exploited Child Unit of NCMEC, parental involvement is the most effective method of Internet safety.
- It is crucial that parents recognize the fact that different approaches need to be taken for different children and circumstances.
- Parents should educate themselves on Internet safety software programs; this would include filtering, blocking and monitoring software. Visit Get Net Wise at www.getnetwise.org for suggestions.
- Parents can enter an agreement, pledge or contract with a child on Internet use and limitations of use.
- Parents need to encourage children to report episodes of sexual exploitation via the Internet, either to them, authorities, ISP or a hotline, such as NCMEC’s Cyber Tipline www.cybertipline.com.
- Parents need to learn and look for warning signs of sexual exploitation of their child. Then, know how to respond to the child in a positive, reassuring manner.

REPORTING THE CRIME

- To your Internet service provider (ISP)
 - Call or report online.
 - They will at least locate the origin of the source.
 - If same service, they might disconnect source.
- To an online hotline
 - Cyber Tipline and others provide online report forms.
 - NCMEC’s Exploited Child Unit will review the report.
 - Findings will be sent to FBI, U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Postal Service, and when known, local law enforcement agencies.
- Law enforcement
 - Jurisdiction of the crime will be determined by the location where the message/material was transmitted or received.
 - FBI will get involved if federal laws have been violated; state lines have to be crossed. FBI has task force investigating these crimes.
 - SBI has established at least two task forces in North Carolina. They will respond at the request of local agencies and when jurisdiction is questioned.
 - Local agencies are ill equipped and not prepared to investigate this type of crime; however, most agencies are in the process of training their officers and investigators to deal with taking and investigating the original complaint and follow up with the victim(s).

