

# Internet Safety

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## What an Online Life Might Include

- Social Networks – Myspace, Facebook, Secondlife, Friendster, Bebo, LiveJournal, Club Penguin, Neopets
- Email and Chat Rooms
- Cell phones – Texting, Pictures, Video
- Online Gaming , Music, movies
- Blogging
- Video Images and Webcams

## Risky Online Behaviors

- FACTS Youth Ages 10 to 17:
  - ✓ 56% report posting personal information online
  - ✓ 43% interact with unknown people online
  - ✓ 35% admit to having unknown people on their friends list
  - ✓ 28% use the Internet to make rude comments to others
  - ✓ 26% have sent their personal information to people they met online
  - ✓ 15% download images from file sharing programs
  - ✓ 13% have knowingly visited X-rated sites
  - ✓ 9% have used the Internet to embarrass or harass people

The Internet did not create these behaviors; the Internet is simply another place where they engage in these behaviors.

## Online Predators – You can be anyone you want to be online!

Male or female, any age, any profession

1 in 25 youth reported receiving an aggressive sexual solicitation online where the solicitor tried to meet them offline.

## **Revealing Too Much**

Personal information – name, age, birthday, address, phone number, schedule, school

Pictures

Video

Content of posts - Inappropriate or illegal activity

Screen names

Buddy lists

Acronyms

## **Social Networking**

A site where users can create a personal profile or page and connect with other Internet users

Incorporate instant messaging, chat rooms, profiles, pictures, email, and blogging all in one site

Many are unaware that they put themselves at risk by revealing personal information on their pages that should be reserved for friends and family

Anyone on the Internet can have access to these sites, including predators

### **If used safely social networking can:**

Enhance communication skills

Improve writing skills

Spark creativity

Help allow teens to develop a personal identity and express themselves

Keep in touch with friends and extended family

### **Tips for children**

Set profiles to private – keep in mind this doesn't completely protect your child

Never post anything you wouldn't want posted on a billboard for anyone to see

Never post contact information or pictures that could inadvertently show who/where the person is (team jerseys)

Don't accept people to your "Friends List" if you don't know who they are

## **Cell Phones – An Extension of the Internet**

Have become mini computer

Texting is HUGE!

Pictures and videos are easily forwarded to others. Once they send them, they lose control of them and put themselves at risk.

Studies show that 1 in 10 teens has posted his or her cell number online.

## **Webcams**

Video camera either built in or connected to a computer

Your surroundings reveal information

Remember that videos can be saved, accessed and altered

## **Blogging**

A way for children to express themselves, often revealing insecurities, feelings, dreams, expectations and frustrations

Others can view and comment

Predators can use insecurities to their advantage

If they don't want anyone to read their personal journal or diary they shouldn't post it online.

## **Online Gaming**

Children connect with users all over the world

Voice enabled chat allows users to hear and speak to each other

This is a big target for Cyberbullying

## **File Sharing**

Music, Movies, Videos, Photos, Software

It's illegal to share copyrighted materials

What you think you're downloading may not be what it is!

Limewire, BearShare, QTRAX MAX, HoZaA

## **Spyware, Spam & Scams**

Check the legitimacy of a website

Only download from trustworthy sources

Don't give information to soliciting sites and emails

If an offer seems too good to be true, it usually is

Don't fall for phishing

[www.protectmichild.com](http://www.protectmichild.com)

### **Online Actions/Real Life Consequences**

Anything your child posts online is NEVER completely private

If it is on the Internet it is NOT PRIVATE and can be viewed by millions. Often times the content cannot be deleted. (Stored on websites server and easily copied on someone's personal computer).

They must think about the image they convey

Students have been suspended from school, lost careers and educational opportunities because of information posted on their profiles and blogs.

- **Real Life Examples:**

Five athletes in Plano, TX were kicked off of their teams for creating a fake MySpace profile in their coach's name.

Two Florida teens, ages 16 and 17, were prosecuted for producing and distributing child pornography – even though the pictures were of themselves, and they only emailed the pictures between each other.

A 25 year old student teacher was refused her teaching degree and license because of a photo she posted to her MySpace page which showed her drinking from a cup and had a caption "drunken pirate".

In 2007 a bank intern was fired after posting a picture of himself dressed as a fairy at a Halloween party on Facebook; he had lied about being sick so he could get out of work.

Wayland students

### **Cyberbullying/Hate Groups**

Spreading rumors and gossip

Posting pictures without consent

Stealing passwords to assume someone's identity

Harassing or threatening with offensive language

32% of teens reported being harassed or bullied online. The incidence is higher among teen girls 15-17 years old at 41%

Teach children to not respond to harassing messages, save the evidence and setup new accounts if necessary

CyberTipline – [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1800-843-5678

### **Safe Guarding at Home – Set Rules for “Tech” Safety**

Empower children with knowledge and confidence to avoid risky behaviors

Empower yourself by learning web tools and applications

Set specific guidelines for going online (time of day, hrs. of use)

Set guidelines for cell phone use

Teach children – never post cell number online, never respond to harassing texts

Parent/Child Contract

Location of home computer

Proxies

Filtering

### **If you child was going out on a Saturday night you would ask at least three questions:**

Where are you going?

Who are you going with?

What time will you be home?

*These questions apply for establishing Internet safety rules:*

What sites will you visit? (Set rules for the type of websites your child may visit).

Who will you talk to? (Set rules for the type of websites messaging, emails, and webcam use.)

How long will you be online? (Encourage children to have interests other than Internet use.)

### **Safe Guarding at School**

- Appropriate Use Policy
- Parent/Child Discussion
- Filters
- Proxies
- Network access

### **Resources:**

“Online Predators’ and their Victims: Myths, Realities, and Implications for Prevention and Treatment.”  
American Psychologist 63:2. February – March 2008.