

Be alert if your child seems to be using the Internet inappropriately.

Your child's changing the Web browser window when you walk in and receiving calls from people you do not know may raise questions in your mind. Your child's typing "POS" (message lingo for "parent over shoulder") certainly will! In many cases, your child may have legitimate reasons for wanting privacy as he or she writes friends, but it is wise to be alert to signs that your child may be using the Internet in a way that can bring harm.



Parents should report pornography or offensive materials that come to your child on the Internet.

Law enforcement is much better trained today. Even cyberbullies and criminals who use anonymous email accounts or other methods to hide their identity can often be traced. Inappropriate activity must be reported quickly, however, to be tracked down. Print or save copies of threatening email or of offensive Internet material. Report online pornography to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at the toll-free number: (800) 843-5678.



Resources

- <http://www.cybertip.ca>
- <http://www.netsmartz.org>
- <http://www.safeteens.com>
- <http://www.cybertipline.com>
- <http://www.mcgruff.org>



Advice for children of different ages

Ages 2-7: Very close supervision is recommended. Select sites for them and set up bookmarks to make it easier for them to go to these sites. Limit email to a list of friends and family you have approved. Use filters to limit accidental access to unsuitable material.

Ages 8-11: Emphasize safe behavior and be actively involved. Investigate chat rooms or online clubs that your child wants to join. Consider use of filtering and other similar software.

Ages 12-18: The Internet becomes an essential tool for their schoolwork and projects. Continue to discuss Internet safety even as it becomes less possible for you to supervise their access. Remind your teenagers that it is very hard to remove material that they have posted on blogs and that their email address may appear on public postings. Help your teenager understand laws related to privacy, software piracy, hacking and other issues.

(Information for this brochure was developed by the North American Council for Online Learning)



Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board

"Leading and Learning with Faith"

www.alcddb.on.ca

This publication is provided as a service to parents and caregivers. With the proliferation of Internet use, the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board offers this guide for safe Internet use for parents and children alike. There has been a huge increase in the number of school-age children who have become victims of persons who would take advantage of their personal safety through the Internet. This publication is directed towards keeping you and your children safe.



Internet Guidelines for Parents

Help your children learn to use the Internet in a safe way.

Become informed about the Internet so you can make sound judgments when questions arise.

Make sure that your children feel comfortable coming to you with questions or comments about what they see online.

Do not overreact if things go wrong. It is better to educate your children about how to use the Internet safely and provide guidelines for safe use. For older children, ultimatums and bans may backfire since there are many places other than home where children can get on the Internet.

Tell your child not to give out personal information (their name, school, telephone number, address, photos, credit card numbers or information about themselves, friends or family).

Explain that they do not have to fill out forms or answer questions on the Internet. Online contests may be another way to collect information. Tell your children not to give credit card numbers or enter into financial transactions without your approval. They need to be careful about what they say in chat rooms since they do not know who is online.

Teach your child to evaluate information on the Internet.

Children need to know that they should not believe everything that they find or receive on the Internet. Their safety and the quality of their schoolwork depends on their learning to tell the difference between reliable and unreliable information.

Tell your children not to arrange face-to-face meetings or telephone calls with people they have met only online.

...and to let you know if someone they have met online wants to arrange a meeting. Explain that some people on the Internet pretend to be something quite different from what they are. Talk to your children and ask them to keep you informed about their online friends. Children should not accept gifts from strangers online.

Tell your children to let you know if they are uncomfortable about anything that they see online.

Teach your child ways to deal with situations, photographs, video or anything online that is disturbing. They do not have to stay online or respond to people who say inappropriate things. They should report behavior that is inappropriate or that could harm them (or other children).

Tell them to let you know if they receive bullying or abusive messages online.

Inform the school or your child's teacher if your child is being bullied online by other children in the school or is receiving abusive communication over the Internet.

Tell your children not to post anything that could hurt others or have a negative effect.

Information that they put on the Internet may be seen by friends, strangers, teachers, and, later, even colleges and employers who may be considering them. Material posted to blogs is very hard to remove from public view. Posting to newsgroups may make their email address public.

Put the computer in an open area of the home (living room, family room, kitchen) and position the screen so it can be seen by others.

While parents cannot always observe students as they use the Internet, it is best to keep the computer in an open area and encourage children to exercise good judgment in how they surf.

Tell your children to protect passwords and not to give them to friends (not even their best friend).**Consider using filters, antivirus, and firewall software to keep your computer secure and protected.**

Update regularly. However, do not rely too much on technical tools. Parents can be lulled into thinking things are safer than they may be. Safety depends on children knowing safe behavior and having open communication with parents.

Help your children learn to develop good Internet practices when using the Internet.

Tell them to be careful about opening ads or email from unfamiliar addresses since these can sometimes carry viruses, cause damage, or bring large quantities of additional unwanted email and ads. Tell your children to ask you before they download files or install software that might damage the computer.

Encourage your child to be honest and ethical about work that is submitted for class.

They need to learn that they should not plagiarize or claim someone else's work as their own. They also need to know that it is against the law to publish on the Internet writing, music, art, or other works that were created and copyrighted by someone else. They may be surprised to learn that teachers can often detect use of borrowed phrases or sentences and may be using special software to detect plagiarism.

Monitor your child's time on the computer so that it is not excessive.

Balance in life is important and they should take breaks.

Make sure that you and your children understand laws relating to copyright, privacy, software piracy, hacking, threats and obscenity.**Let your children understand that you, as their parent, want to protect them.**

Communicate and work together as you both keep learning new ways to use the Internet in a safe manner.

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