

10 Tips for Internet Safety

Offered by: The Committee to RAISE Tyler

Raising Awareness in Internet Safety through Education

- 1. Establish clear rules.** Create a set of rules or “safety pledge” for your kids when they’re on the Internet – what sites they can visit, how long they can be online, etc. Post those rules on or near the computers in your home. For examples of safety pledges for different age groups, go to: <http://www.netsmartz.org/resources/pledge.htm>.
- 2. Install security software.** Suddenlink offers customers subscribing to our most popular Internet service tiers a free security suite with parental controls from McAfee, one of the nation’s leading security technology companies. For more information, go to: <http://www.suddenlink.com/netsafety>.
- 3. Keep control.** Place all Internet accounts, primary screen names, and controlling passwords in *your name* – and then help your children choose *neutral* screen names that provide *no hints* about their identities, ages, genders, or locations.
- 4. Put computers in the family room** or in other high-traffic areas of the home, so your children aren’t online without direct supervision or without an adult nearby.
- 5. Select kid-friendly search engines.** Examples include: <http://cybersleuth-kids.com>, <http://www.kidsclick.org>, <http://www.askforkids.com>, and <http://kids.yahoo.com>.
- 6. Be familiar and get involved.** Visit your children’s’ favorite Web and social networking sites, such as <http://www.facebook.com>, <http://www.myspace.com>, <http://www.friendster.com>. Show an interest in and start an open dialogue about their online activities. Where appropriate, participate in some of those activities, like playing online games together. Your awareness, openness, and involvement will help make your children feel more comfortable about coming to you if a problem arises. Also: Know with whom your children are exchanging e-mails and instant messages, and explain what personal information is and why they should *never* provide it without your permission. Finally, make sure your children know that it is *never* acceptable to meet in person with someone they’ve only met online.
- 7. Talk about “spam.”** Explain what spam is, namely, emails from unknown sources that we didn’t ask for – and caution your kids to never open or respond to a spam e-mail, or to open attachments from unknown senders. Internet viruses are often spread via opened e-mails and e-mail attachments.
- 8. Talk about offensive, dangerous, and threatening communications.** If you have any concerns, inform local law enforcement. You can also report worrisome communications at <http://www.cybertipline.com>.
- 9. Talk about what to do if children see something online that scares, confuses, or makes them uncomfortable.** Show them how to turn off the monitor and emphasize that it’s not their fault if they see something upsetting. Remind children to tell you, a teacher, or another trusted adult if they see anything online that bothers them.
- 10. Keep on learning.** The Internet is constantly evolving, and with that evolution comes new opportunities and new risks. For more information about how you can stay up to speed, visit <http://pointsmartclicksafe.org> or <http://www.netsmartz.org>.

