

Internet Safety

For kids and teens



Walking the line while being online

Going online can be much like walking a tight rope; it's probably for the best if you don't get too distracted.

Have you ever wondered what might happen right before you double click your web browser? The internet literally brings the world to your fingertips, but though the world holds many things wondrous, it also harbors many dangers. And on the world wide web especially, those dangers can be very, VERY well disguised. Just as surely as if you and your family were traveling to a foreign country, you need to do your part to keep them and yourself safe from harm. Have fun, enjoy the sights, but be careful as you go about your business.

Never give out personal information to anyone online (like your name, address, phone number, school name, where you hang out).

Don't put personal information like your name and birthdate in a screen name.

Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you meet online.

Always let a parent know if someone online asks you to meet them someplace.

Never go into chat rooms unless your parents approve.

Never open emails from people you don't know.

Always keep your passwords secret.

Never send pictures of yourself to someone without your parent's approval.

Without a doubt, the internet is one of the most useful and powerful tools ever invented by man. And like most powerful tools, it really should come with instructions and a user's guide. The instructions are pretty straight-forward, but the user's guide would definitely include some precautions because, like every other tool ever invented, the internet is neither good nor bad, but it can be used by both good and bad people. That's what this is about; using the internet safely. With that in mind, here are some of the basics.

Never post pictures of yourself online (even on MySpace and Facebook).

Any pictures posted online should use the lowest resolution possible.

Never go to links you don't recognize.

Always let your parent know if someone offers you a gift.

Always tell an adult if you see anything or get a message that is hostile, threatening, suggestive, obscene, or makes you feel uncomfortable.

Don't believe everything you read on-line. Something that is "too good to be true" probably is. People aren't always what they claim to be.

Understand that your parents will be looking after you to protect you -- even if that means "invading your privacy" or "spying on you".



This brochure was developed by the Safe Environment Program of the Archdiocese of New York. If you have any questions, please visit us on the web at www.archny.org/pastoral/safe-environment-program or feel free to call us at 212-371-1000 ext. 2810 or email us at safe@archny.org

Internet Safety

For parents

Holding the line online



As if parenting did not used to have enough challenges, along comes the internet. Keeping an eye on the neighborhood bully is one thing, but spotting the efforts of a faceless and malicious stranger requires some adjustment to historical parental skills. The internet can provide countless benefits to your family, but the wide open access to information can present substantial lures and temptations to children of all ages. Whether it may be naiveté, curiosity, or the desire to find answers to difficult questions, children are very much aware that answers can be found online for any query imaginable. How do parents utilize the power of knowledge and convenience that is the world wide web while protecting our families from the unsavory efforts of those who abuse the same tool?

Watch for warning signs:

- Your child spends large amounts of time on-line, especially at night.
- You find pornography on your child's computer.
- Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.
- Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.
- Your child is using an on-line account belonging to someone else.

Like it or not...ready or not, keeping our kids safe online is part of our responsibilities as parents. Like every other safety practice in the home or family, it all comes down to writing the rules, living by the rules, and, if necessary, enforcing the rules. Here are some tips on making the family computer not only more user-friendly, but more family-friendly as well.

Actively protect your children

- Actively supervise your kids when they are online. You would when they were crossing the street or in the pool wouldn't you?
- Talk to your child about sexual victimization and potential on-line danger.
- Spend time with your children on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite on-line activities.
- Keep the computer in a common room, not their bedroom. It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household.



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