

Fact Sheet: Social Networking CyberSafety for Students

9 Ways to Stay Safe

1. **Be age wise.** Follow the site's age guidelines. The minimum age to become a member of Facebook is 13.
2. **Know your friends.** Make sure you know persons in real life before adding them as a friend.
3. **Restrict access.** Keep your page settings private so that only those whom you know and accept as friends may see your page and profile.
4. **Don't post identifiers.** Do not post any personal information on the Internet such as your full name, phone number, address, or name of your school. Do not put pictures online of you at your school, in your uniform, or in front of your house
5. **Don't meet strangers.** Never agree to meet someone in person whom you have only met online. Do not respond to e-mails or instant messages from a stranger.
6. **Get & give permission.** Make sure that your friends have your permission to post something about you or your picture online. Do the same for them. Regularly check what others have posted about you to make sure they are not putting you at risk.
7. **Think of your future.** You are building a reputation with every message and picture you post. Once something is online, even if you remove it, it is virtually impossible to guarantee all copies are deleted. Some employers and colleges now check online profiles as part of their background checks.
8. **"Friend" your parents.** Give your parents access to your site. Let them see what you are posting. Give them every reason to trust you. Remember, they love you and want to keep you safe.
9. **Make friends in person.** Face-to-face friendships are important too. Find things to do with others that will help you develop real-people relationships.

You Can Stop Cyberbullying

- Never share passwords with other people.
- Do not to respond to cyberbullying. Responding usually just makes it worse.
- If possible, block the bully by putting him or her on the block list in e-mail or instant-messenger programs.
- Keep a copy of the cyberbullying message for evidence.
- Tell a trusted adult if cyberbullying occurs. Report the activity to school officials if it happens at school.
- Practice the Golden Rule: Don't do anything to someone you wouldn't want done to you! Never participate yourself in cyberbullying.

**Never post anything
anywhere online that
you don't want
everyone to see!**



You Can Act To Protect Against The Risk

Cyberbullying

One of the popular features on social networking sites is the ability to post comments on a person's page. Cyberbullies can post rude comments about a person's appearance or anything else. Anyone who visits the profile can see the rude comments

Identity Theft

Posting too much personal information (name, birth date, address, Social Security number) is an open invitation to identity thieves.

Inappropriate Conduct

Profile pages allow users to post information about hobbies, favorite bands, movies, and so on. This feature lets people make connections based on common interests, but it could lead to inappropriate relationships if users communicate with someone they do not know in real life.

Damage To Future

Users may post inappropriate pictures or text on their site thinking the information is private. If the pictures or messages get into the wrong hands, they can damage the person's reputation and future. Employers and college admissions offices sometimes check social networking sites.

Resources

Social Networking

The best way to learn about social networking is to join one of the sites. Most are free; they make their money from onsite advertising. Or read about the sites on www.wikipedia.com

Identity Theft

For help:

- www.ftc.gov/idtheft/

For creating strong passwords:

- http://www.getsafeonline.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1127

Cyberbullying

NetSmartz has videos on keeping your profile safe and on cyberbullying:

<http://www.netsmartz.org/nettens.htm>

Wired Safety has a hot line for immediate help, plus what to watch out for on video-sharing sites:

<http://www.wiredsafety.org>

Stop Bullying Now is especially for elementary/middle/high school students:

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>

References

www.common sense media.org

