

Appropriate Online Behavior
Social Networking Etiquette
Cyber Bullying Awareness

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Think Before You Share

- **What you post could have a bigger "audience" than you think.**
Even if you use privacy settings, it's impossible to completely control who sees your social networking profile, pictures, videos, or texts. Before you click "send," think about how you will feel if your family, teachers, coaches, or neighbors find it.
- **Once you post information online, you can't take it back.**
You may think that you've deleted information from a site — or that you will delete it later. Know that older versions may exist on other people's computers. That means your posts could live somewhere permanently.
- **Get someone's okay before you share photos or videos they're in.**
Online photo albums are great for storing and sharing pictures of special events, and camera phones make it easy to capture every moment. Stop and think about your own privacy — and other people's — before you share photos and videos online. It can be embarrassing, unfair, and even unsafe to send or post photos and videos without getting permission from the people in them.

Interact with Tact

- **Politeness counts**

Texting is just another way for people to have a conversation. Texters are just like people talking face-to-face or on the phone: they appreciate "please" and "thank you" (or pls and ty).

- **Tone it down.**

In online conversations, using all CAPS, long rows of exclamation points or large bolded fonts is the same as shouting.

- **Use Cc: and Reply all: sparingly.**

Before you hit send on an email, stop and think about whether everyone needs to see that message.

- **Avatars are people too.**

When you're playing a game or exploring an online world where you can create a character and interact with others, remember real people are behind those characters on the screen. Respect their feelings just like you would in person. Remember that your character or avatar is a virtual version of you — what does it tell people about you and your interests?

Interact with Tact

- **Don't impersonate**

It's wrong and can be hurtful to create sites, pages, or posts that seem to come from someone else, like someone in your class or a teacher.

- **Speak up**

If you see something inappropriate on a social networking site or in a game or chat room, let the website know and tell an adult you trust. Using Report Abuse links can help keep sites fun for everyone.

- **Don't stand for bullying — online or off.**

Treat others the way you want to be treated — whether you're interacting with them online, on your phone, or in person.

Learn What You Can Do About Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying that happens online. It can happen in an email, a text message, an online game, or on a social networking site. It might involve rumors or images posted on someone's profile or passed around for other people to see.

- **You know that, right?**

So you know that cyber bullying is a lose-lose proposition: it often makes the person being harassed feel bad — and it makes the bully look bad. It also might lead to punishment from school authorities or the police.

- **What do you do if someone harasses you online?**

Keep a cool head, and don't respond in kind. Most people realize that bullying is wrong. Sometimes you can stop bullying if you ignore or block the person. You also can report abuse to the website where it's taking place. If it continues, save the evidence and ask for help from an adult you trust.

- **What do you do if you witness cyber bullying?**

Tell the bully to stop. Most kids don't bully, and there's no reason for anyone to put up with it. This mean behavior usually stops pretty quickly when somebody stands up for the person being bullied.

Protect Yourself

- **Use privacy settings to restrict who can see and post on your profile.**

Many social networking sites, chat rooms, and blogs have privacy settings. Find out how to turn these settings on, and then do it. Limit your online friends to people you actually know.

- **Learn about social mapping.**

Many mobile phones have GPS technology, and there are applications that allow you to find your friends — and allow them to find you. Use GPS and social mapping apps only with people you know personally and trust. Take advantage of privacy features in apps and on your phone.

- **Trust your gut if you feel threatened or uncomfortable because of something online.**

Tell an adult you trust, and ask for help reporting your concerns to the police, school officials, and others who can help.

Protect Your Information

- **Some information should stay private.**

Your Social Security number and family financial information — like your parents' bank account or credit card numbers — should stay in the family.

- **Keep your passwords private.**

The longer your password, the harder it is to crack. Don't share your passwords with anybody, including your best friends, your boyfriend, or your girlfriend.

- **Don't reply to text, email, or pop-up messages that ask you to reply with personal information.**

Even if the message looks like it comes from a person or organization you know, or threatens that something bad will happen if you don't reply. These messages may be fakes, sent to steal your information.

Protect Your Computer

- **Be cautious about opening attachments or clicking on links.**

They may contain viruses or spyware.

- **Sometimes free stuff — like games, ring tones or screen savers — can hide viruses or spyware.**

Don't download free stuff unless you trust the source and can the file with security software.

- **Use peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing services with caution.**

If you use file-sharing software at all, install it properly, and scan any files you download with security software before you open or play them. Otherwise, you could be sharing information your family expects to keep private, like financial records.

Responsible Texting

Texting

- When texting, respect others. Texting shorthand can lead to misunderstandings. Think about how a text message might be read and understood before sending it. Also:
 - ignore texts from people you don't know
 - block numbers from your cell phone that are unsolicited
 - avoid posting your cell phone number online
 - never provide financial information in response to a text

Sexting

- Sending or forwarding sexually explicit photos, videos, or messages from a mobile phone is known as "sexting." Don't do it. In addition to risking your reputation and your friendships, you could be breaking the law if you create, forward, or even save this kind of message. Know the consequences! They can stay with you a long time.

For more information go to

<http://onguardonline.gov/features/feature-0003-featured-info-educators>