



Internet Safety

The Internet can provide an effective means of communicating, can be an useful educational tool or convenient access to shopping. However, not all people and not all information on the Internet are reliable or even safe. The following tips will help you protect your children from the potential hazards:

- It is easier to monitor the use of a computer if you keep it in an open, frequently used room like the family room or kitchen, rather than a more private or secluded area like a child's bedroom.
- Decide how much time your child should spend on the Internet and/or playing computer games, just as you would set limits on TV viewing. Make sure that surfing the Net doesn't take the place of social interaction, homework or other important activities.
- View appropriate sites with your child and make a list of or "bookmark" those family oriented or educational sites where he is allowed to go. Sit down with your child from time to time and let him show you what he's learned and where he goes.
- Make use of the parental control features that are offered by some online services and/or buy blocking software. However, don't rely entirely on these. Nothing takes the place of parental awareness and it is very easy to fall or be led into inappropriate or even pornographic sites.
- Teach your children that they should never give out any personal information (including such things as the name or location of their school, their phone number or address, their friends' names, etc.), never agree to meet anyone they've been "chatting" with and never respond to messages that are mean or confusing or make them feel uncomfortable.
- Not all offensive material on the Internet is illegal but child pornography is illegal. If you or anyone in your household receives any, immediately contact your local law enforcement.
- Ask about the computer use policy in place at your child's school. Be sure your child understands it and that it meets your own standards.
- Periodically review your family computer rules and discuss issues such as privacy, trust, pornography, chat rooms, etc. Open, honest communication about the dangers of the Internet and how to handle them will help your child make positive decisions if he's ever faced with sexually explicit or violent or other inappropriate material.

Resources:

F.B.I. Office of Crimes Against Children
935 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20535
202-324-3666

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.missingkids.com
1-800-THE-LOST

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

National Parent Teacher Association
www.pta.org

EDINA POLICE DEPARTMENT

4801 West 50th Street • Edina, Minnesota 55424
www.EdinaMN.gov • 952-826-1610 • Fax 952-826-1607