



Halton Regional Police Service

Safe Internet Surfing



As parents, we are always teaching our children about safety. We tell them not to talk to strangers or accept rides from them, and to look both ways when crossing the street. We mistakenly believe that once our children are home, our job is done and they are safe. This is no longer true.

While the Internet offers users the ability to instantly access information, places and events all over the world, it is also a vehicle for criminal harassment and unlawful activity.

Unlike other communication tools, no individual, company or regulatory body controls the Internet. This lack of centralized oversight has opened the door to a number of potential issues and opportunities.

Technological Developments:

As with any technology, you and your child should be aware of security issues so you can make informed decisions about their Internet use.



Consider purchasing software that filters and/or blocks certain Internet sites. Doing so is a good way to ensure that your child is monitored and protected when they are exploring the Internet alone.

Managing The Internet At Home:

When introducing your child to the Internet, establish a family contract that limits the time (per day) your child is allowed to be online, as well as the rules for Internet use. By reducing computer time, you can decrease opportunities for incidents to occur.

Surf with your child the first few times they are online. This shared learning will teach your child how to use the Internet properly and to only view appropriate sites.



Tips For Parents:

- Place your computer in a family-friendly room rather than in a child's bedroom or basement
- Set age-appropriate and consistent guidelines for using the computer. Monitor the amount of time and when it is used.
- Create a password that is hard to guess but easy to remember to prevent computer use when you are not around. Change this password often.
- Install computer monitoring software to track websites and chatrooms visited and e-mails sent. Let your child know they should not expect privacy on the computer.
- Be aware of when your child is sending images. Carefully watch the use of webcams, digital cameras and mobile phones.
- Look into filtering software that blocks objectionable material from being displayed
- Ensure your child knows to never give out personal information on the computer
- Explain the risks of providing information to people your child doesn't really know
- Never allow your child to chat with or meet a computer stranger
- Be cautious of offers inviting your child to meet someone or have someone visit your home. **Remember:** You don't really know the person at the end of the Internet connection and you may be in for a surprise
- Keep a close eye on your credit card bills
- Report suspicious online activity to the police

Tips For Kids:

- Remember to use your safety sense online as if you were talking to a stranger face-to-face. The person you are chatting with may not be who you think.
- Always use a code name
- Never give anyone you meet online personal information such as your address, telephone number, where your parents work and/or the name and location of your school
- Never send anyone your picture. Don't accept any photographs sent to you.
- Never respond to a message(s) that make you feel uncomfortable. Tell your parents immediately.
- Never send a rude or insulting message to anyone online. Doing so will make the recipient angry and could cause problems.
- Make sure your browser is set to refuse 'cookies'
- Report harassing or threatening messages to your parents
- Never agree to meet someone you met online without checking with your parents first

Helpful Websites:

www.bullybeware.ca / www.bullybeware.com
www.bullying.org
www.cogeco.ca/security
www.cyberbullying.ca
www.cybersmart.org
www.cybertip.ca
www.internet.bell.ca (under Security)
www.rogers.com

For more information, contact:

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Progress Through Participation