

# Internet Security for Children

There are good reasons for kids to go online. They can chat with friends, research school projects and explore hobbies and interests. But the Internet also holds potential for harm. Young people can become detached from real-world friends and activities, they might neglect homework and, worst of all, kids can fall victim to predators on the Internet.

Just as you teach your children to follow safety rules for talking to strangers or crossing the street, you can teach them how to stay safe while surfing the 'Net.

Set the time allowed on the computer every day. (e.g. during the week only for homework & 3 hours on weekends).

Set up the computer in a common area so you can see what's going on.

Try to be **at least** as computer literate as your child.

Let your child know that you have the right to see what's on the screen if you choose.

Talk to your child about what sites they visited. Get to know their favourite sites.

Surf with your child. Bookmark safe sites that your child can visit alone.

Tell them not to give out personal information to people they meet on-line or to post their photograph on-line.

Tell them to let you know immediately if they feel uncomfortable about something. Also tell them not to respond to messages that are mean or bad.

Tell them not to give their passwords to anyone but you.

Teach them **not** to open e-mail from people they do not know.

If your child closes the door when going on-line or suddenly logs off when you approach you might want to check your browser's history or cache file. If you see something suspicious or the history has been erased speak frankly to the child. Remind them that there are thieves & predators on-line too. Someone they met on-line **may not be** the twelve-year-old girl they claim to be.

**To find the cache folder in a Windows system:** go to START and select SEARCH. Choose FILES and type in the word "cache." You can also look for a folder called "Temporary Internet Files" where recent Web graphics are stored.

Filtering programs prohibit certain words or pictures from being viewed. Keep in mind, though, that filters can make regular Web surfing clumsy and may also filter valuable sites (e.g. while doing research for biology homework). Try instead to educate your child matter-of-factly so they automatically avoid inappropriate sites.

For further information visit [www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com) & [www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com)