## Basic Cybersmart Tips for Parents & Guardians

Today's kids are getting connected at younger and younger ages. They're exposed to cyberspace at home, at school, and at their friend's homes. This means that it's important for you to keep current with your children's online activities and to communicate with them often.

Here are some basics to help you protect your children against many dangers on the Web, which can range from sexual predators and bullies to your children's own potentially risky behavior.

1) Learn all you can about the internet. For younger children, find and mark sites for them to visit, perhaps with you. For older children, it's wise to become familiar with today's most popular social networking sites.

2) Talk to your kids about the internet and the importance of being safe while online.

3) Put the computer in an open area of your home, such as the living room or kitchen. This will make it easier for you to monitor their activities online.

4) Become familiar with parental control programs. These computer software programs filter/block content that is inappropriate for your children.

5) Monitor your children's internet use. If children get uneasy when you enter a room while they're on the computer, this might indicate they are visiting off-limits sites or engaging in some questionable online activity.

6) Have your children show you their favorite online sites.

7) Get to know your children's online friends and remind them to avoid befriending people they don't know and trust.

8) Set up and/or learn all of your children's passwords and screen names/usernames. Make sure screen names don't reveal information about your children's real names, school, addresses, or age. Keep a record of these screen names.

9) Spend time online together until you are assured that your children understand the internet's potential dangers and how to handle difficult situations.

10) If your children have internet access at their friends homes, ask the parents what rules they have in place. Find out if the children are monitored while online.

11) Enforce screen-time rules. Also, limit the time your children spend in front of computers for non-academic purposes.

## Popular Sexting Shortcuts:

ADR– Address
ASL– Age, Sex, Location
GNOC– Get Naked On Camera
KFY/K4Y– Kiss For You
KPC– Keeping Parents Clueless
LMIRL– Let's Meet In Real Life Sex
MorF– Male or Female
MOS– Mom Over Shoulder
NALOPKT– Not A Lot Of People Know That
WYCM– Will You Call Me?

NIFOC– Nude In Front Of Computer
P911– Parents Alert
PAL– Parents Are Listening
PAW– Parents Are Watching
PIR– Parent In Room
TDTM– Talk Dirty To Me
8– Oral Sex
99– Parent is no longer watching
143– I love you
182– I hate you
MOSS– Member Of the Same Sex
MOOS– Member Of the Opposite

## Common Chat Acronyms to Know:

B4N– Bye for now
BF– Boyfriend
BFF– Best friends forever
BRB– Be Right Back
BTW– By The Way
CWYL– Chat with you later
CYT– See you tomorrow
DK– Don't know
EM-Excuse me
FWIW– For what it's worth
GF– Girlfriend
HBU– How 'bout you?
IMHO– In my humble opinion
JIC– Just in case
J/C– Just checking
L8R– Later
LMK– Let me know

LOL– Laughing out loud
NM– Nevermind
NMU– Not much, you?
OTP– On the phone
OMG– Oh my God
RN– Right now
ROTFL– Rolling on the floor laughing
RU– Are you?
SITD– Still in the dark
SO– Significant other
SWDYT: So what do you think?
TOM- Tomorrow
TTYL– Talk to you later
TYVM– Thank you very much
WDYT– What do you think?
WFM– Works for me



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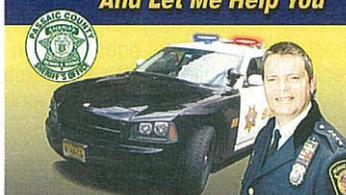
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# CYBERSMART PARENTING



*Keep up with your kids by learning the latest on:*

- *Internet Safety*
- *Social Networking*
- *Cyberbullying*
- *Sexting*





# SHERIFF RICHARD H. BERDNIK

# TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE INTERNET

It's important to tell your children what you expect from them as they surf the Web. Here are some things you can say:

- "Never tell anyone online anything personal about you unless you first ask me. This includes your name, address, phone number, password(s), school names, or parent's names."

- "Never agree to meet anyone in person you meet online unless I say you can and I go with you."

- "Remember that online a person may pretend to be someone he or she is not."

- "Don't say mean things to anyone online, or pass along mean things (gossip) about others."

- "If others say mean things online, go to another web site or sign off quickly. Always tell me if this happens."

- "Don't stay on any site you would feel uncomfortable showing to me. Always let me know immediately if you find something upsetting on the internet."

- "Don't do anything online that you know you shouldn't do in real life."

- "Don't respond to messages that have bad words in them or just seem weird."

- "Never e-mail or post photos of yourself without my permission."

- "Get my approval before downloading anything from the internet."

- "If you don't follow the rules, you will lose privileges."

> **80%** of teens said they either did not have parental rules about Internet use or found ways around the rules.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

According to research reports, in 2011, nearly 19.4 million U.S. teens were social network users and nearly 3 million children (3-11 years old) also used social networking web sites. Among teens 12-17 years old, 81% are members of an online social network.

Social networking doesn't come without many dangers. These dangers come from many sources. Sexual predators may use the sites to lure youngsters into risky situations. Bullies may post hurtful comments online about others. Identity thieves may garner information for their crimes from sites. Children themselves might post inappropriate photos online for one or two friends, only to have the photos sent far and wide, causing embarrassment and harm.

If your children are ready for social networking sites, it's time for you to go online and learn how these sites operate and what their rules are. Then you can educate your children to use these sites safely.

> Some of today's most popular social networking sites are Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, MySpace, YouTube, Mocospace, myYearbook, and Twitter. According to "How Teens Use Media," a 2009 report from Nielsen Company, about half of U.S. teens use Facebook.

Social networking also takes place on gaming web sites and online gaming services, available through consoles such as Nintendo Wii, Nintendo DSI, PSP, PlayStation, and Xbox. Here, players create profiles and chat with other players.

## CYBERBULLYING AND YOUR CHILDREN

Bullies are nothing new, but internet accessibility has given bullying a new twist. It has created cyberbullies, who bully others via electronic devices. Cyberbullies use e-mail, IM's, blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites as well as cell phone texting and photos to harass their victims. In 2007, a report from the National Crime Prevention Council indicated that 43% of teens reported being victims of cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullies do such things as:**

- Send insulting messages and threats

- Spread rumors

- Post embarrassing photos

- Pose as someone else and send messages supposedly from that person

- Share someone's secrets online

- Exclude someone from an online group

**FAQs About Cyberbullying**

Q. *Who is affected by cyberbullying?*

A. Shy middle-school and high-school aged children are the most likely to be affected. Your children may be targets and not tell you, for fear of losing online privileges or out of embarrassment.

Q. *What are the dangers of cyberbullying?*

A. Bullies may threaten children at school, but cyberbullies can be everywhere in cyberspace. Hurtful messages or pictures can be e-mailed, posted online or forwarded via cell phones, making the bullying widespread and long-lasting. This can upset victims enough to attempt suicide or hurt others.

Q. *What are the warning signs a child is being cyberbullied?*

A. Warning signs include: unexplained anxiety, anger, sadness, or fear, especially after using the computer or cell phone. Falling grades, lack of interest in friends, school or other activities, trouble sleeping, more or less interest in the computer or cell phone.

Q. *What can parents and guardians do about cyberbullying?*

A. Tell your children to let you know if they are being cyberbullied. If any of your children are:

  * Have them save all communication from the cyberbully, including e-mails, IMs, and text messages.

  * Report incidents to your internet and/or cell phone service provider, as well as the appropriate authorities, such as your child's school and/or the police.

  * Find out how to block the cyberbully's e-mail address and phone number. You can also "unfriend" someone from a social networking site. Change your child's online contact information.

Q. *What can your child do to help put an end to cyberbullying?*

A. Instruct your children to: avoid sites where cyberbullying occurs, refuse to encourage or pass along cyberbuylling messages, ask friends to stop cyberbullying, and block and delete messages from cyberbullies, report all incidents to a trusted adult.

## WHAT IS SEXTING?

The danger of sexting emerges as your children grow into their teens (and sometimes before). Sexting involves sending sexually explicit messages and/or nude or semi-nude photos electronically. This can be via cell phone or over the internet.

**The trouble with sexting:**

- Photos can be altered from original copies. Photos can be distributed widely. Therefore, sexting can ruin reputations and limit one's ability to get into college, join the military, or get a desired job.

- It can cause anxiety and depression.

- It is a crime. Federal law makes it illegal to possess, distribute, or take sexually explicit images of anyone under age 18. State laws vary, but sexting may lead to jail time and to teens being labeled as sex offenders.

- Information sent via cell phone is available for as long as 30-50 years.

**What Can Parents & Guardians Do About Sexting?**

1. Talk to your children about the dangers of sexting.

2. Set rules and consequences for breaking these rules.

3. Be aware of what your children are posting publicly.

4. Know who they're communicating with.

5. Learn how to use their cell phones.

6. Be aware of sexting shortcuts and acronyms. (See back page for examples)

7. Be aware of phone game applications that allow chat.