INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Monitor your child's Internet use consistently. Keep the computer in a public area of the house. This is not a violation of your child's privacy; this is a safeguarding measure and part of your responsibility as a parent. Keep in mind that your child's personal websites and/or blog is a public domain, not private property.
2. Decide on a reasonable amount of time that your child can spend online each day and be prepared to enforce it.
3. If your child belongs to a social networking site (MySpace, Facebook, Tagged, Xanga, etc), look closely at what information they have posted in their member profiles and blogs, including photos and videos. Predators, bullies, profanity and threats often occur in these types of sites.
4. Find out what other websites your child's social networking site is linked to. Sometimes your child's web pages may be safe but they may be linked to a site which could endanger them (a pornographic site, a site in which a friend mentions your child's phone number, a site slandering school administrators).
5. Talk to your child about your Internet safety concerns in a positive way and give them the opportunity to make safety resolutions that you can both live with (example, how much time can be spent online? Are chat rooms permitted?).
6. Explain that your kids should: Never give out personal information (name, address, phone, school name), NEVER meet anyone from online without your permission, NEVER open emails from unknown senders and NEVER share their photo with strangers over the Internet. Shared photos are an easy way for a predator to find a child or modify your child's image for pornographic use.
7. Encourage your children to bring anything strange or upsetting to your attention and don't overreact when they do (fear of losing Internet privileges is why kids don't tell parents about problems—and why they may start surfing the web somewhere else).
8. Stay in touch with your kid's online activities. Know who their online friends are (and who is on their buddy list), just as you would their other friends.
9. Learn how filtering and monitoring software can assist you in protecting your children (check with your Internet service provider to find out if filtering or monitoring is available for free with your provider). However, don't rely completely on software to protect your children. Education and parental involvement are the primary methods of prevention.
10. Internet accounts should always be in the parent's name. The parent should maintain the primary email account and be in charge of all passwords and parental controls. Kids should never share their passwords with anyone other than their parents.
11. Notify the police if someone your child met online starts calling them, sending gifts, or trying to lure them from home.
12. Discuss what constitutes an inappropriate use of the Internet (harassing others, bullying, using profanity, looking at pornography, making purchases without your permission, etc) and what the consequences will be.