

Never

- **Never** give out personal information like your full name, hometown, age, birthday, telephone number, parent's work address, credit card number, or the name of your school to anyone you meet on line. If someone asks you about these things, respond that you are not allowed to give out that information. If they keep asking, leave the site or log off the Internet.
- **Never** agree to get together with someone you "meet" online without telling your parents. If your parents agree to the meeting, be sure that you hold it in a public place and a parent accompanies you.
- **Never** send pictures of yourself, family, friends to anyone you meet online without checking with your parents.
- **Never** answer messages that say offensive or scary things, messages that talk about private body parts, or messages that include threats to harm your friends or family if you don't do what they say. These types of messages are just meant to scare you. If anything makes you feel uncomfortable, give a copy of the message to your parents. Remember that it is not your fault if you get a message like that.
- **Never** give your e-mail address or IM screen name to anyone you "meet" on the Internet without first asking permission of your parents.
- **Never** call anyone you "meet" online. People can get your phone number through caller ID, collect calls or 800 numbers, and with your number, they can find out where you live.

Be Careful!

- People online may not be who they seem. Because you can't see or hear them, it's easy for people to pretend someone they are not. Just because a person says that he or she is a twelve-year-old, doesn't mean it is true.
- Watch out when someone offers you something for free. It is unlikely that it is really free and it is an opportunity to get your personal information.
- There are Internet sites that are for adults only. If you find yourself there LEAVE IMMEDIATELY and tell your parents.
- Check your sources carefully. It's easy for just about anyone to publish online, and not everyone has your best interests in mind. You wouldn't want to write a report with inaccurate information, and you wouldn't want to get hurt following bad advice. If you are confused about a source, ask your parents or a librarian for help.

Some sites to check out:

www.safekids.com
www.rainbow-ridge.org
www.blueridgethunder.com
www.cyberangels.com/kids/zine/index.html
www.cyberangels.com/teens/index.html

(these sites and the information set forth therein are not authorized by nor controlled by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts nor the office the Middlesex District Attorney)

Internet Tips For Kids

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Dear Middlesex Youth,

The Internet offers you opportunities to learn, to meet people from around the world, to chat with friends across town, and much more. It can be a wonderful tool for research projects, planning a trip, or finding out about current events. However, it also can present dangers. Unlike a diary, the Internet is not private. The people you meet online are not always who they seem to be, and the material available is not always what you want to see. It's important that you and your parents work together to learn how to use the Internet safely. This brochure will provide you with some tips to a safe and enjoyable experience on the web. I hope you will look it over carefully, and discuss with your parents some strategies for a safe online experience. Good luck!

Cordially,



Martha Coakley
Middlesex District Attorney

Did You Know? ¹

- Almost nineteen percent of youth Internet users received an unwanted solicitation in the past year. Five percent of youth received a distressing solicitation.
- Twenty-five percent of youth were exposed to material they did not want to see while online.
- Six percent of youth were harassed while online.

Talk To Your Parents

- Talk with your parents before you go online. Decide with them the time of day and the length of time you can be online, and the sites you can visit.
- If you are confused about something you see online or that happens while you are online, ask your parents! If they are not around, log off the Internet and talk to them later.
- Always ask your parents before downloading anything or filling out a survey or guest book. Some of these programs can damage your computer.
- Tell your parents if something you come across online makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Try surfing with your parents. Often, you know more about the Internet and the computer than they do, and you can teach them a lot.

¹ U.S. Department of Justice. "Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey." *OJJDP Fact Sheet*. March 2001 #04.

Do's and Don'ts

- **Don't** complete an online profile.
- **Don't** sign a guest book with personal information or set up a web page asking others to fill out their names, hometowns, or other information.
- **Don't** give out your password to anyone. Passwords are intended to protect your computer files. Giving away your password is like giving a stranger the keys to your house.
- **Don't** copy material that you find on the Internet and pretend that it's your own. Copying material from a book, magazine, or the Internet is plagiarism, and it is illegal.
- **Don't** say or write anything online that you would not want made public. The Internet is not a private place.
- **Do** use the Internet to publish your own writing and artwork on the World Wide Web, but leave your name off and make sure it is password-protected.
- **Do** use the Internet to meet friends in other countries or to keep in touch with pen pals that live far away, but don't give out personal information.
- **Do** use the Internet to learn more about universities and colleges that you may be interested in attending.
- **Do** use the Internet to help with schoolwork, and visit museums in other cities.