

Set the Rules

- ❖ Set guidelines for your children before they use the Internet.
- ❖ Work together with your child to decide what is and is not appropriate. For example, you could have your child write a statement agreeing not to visit certain web sites.
- ❖ Establish Internet privacy rules for the family. Remember many services provide free e-mail, so your family's e-mail address may not be your child's only address.
- ❖ Tell your children never to respond to threatening or obscene messages, and never to click on links in an e-mail or download attachments from someone they don't know.

Children Should Never

- ❖ **Arrange** a meeting with someone they meet online.
- ❖ **Give out** information about them self such as full name, home address, school name, telephone number, age or other personal information. Also, they should never use their name or e-mail address in any public directories or profiles.
- ❖ **Post** photographs on web forums that are available to the public.

What Can You Do?

- ❖ Ask your Internet Service Provider (ISP) whether they offer filtering services to families with young children. If not, check out filtering software that you can purchase for a modest cost. Also ask your ISP about their privacy policy.
- ❖ Check the Internet cache and history to see what sites your child visits (contact your ISP for help). If your child clears the cache often, find out why.
- ❖ If you become aware of the transmission or use of child pornography while online, immediately notify the police, contact the District Attorney's Office, or report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tipline at www.missingkids.com/cybertip or (800) 843-5678.
- ❖ If your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy to your Internet Service Provider (ISP), and ask for their assistance. Additionally, contact the local police or the District Attorney's Office.
- ❖ Be alert to warning signs such as your child turning the monitor off quickly or changing the screen as you enter the room, receiving mail or phone calls from people you do not know, or visiting web sites containing information on bomb-making, drugs, or other illegal activity.

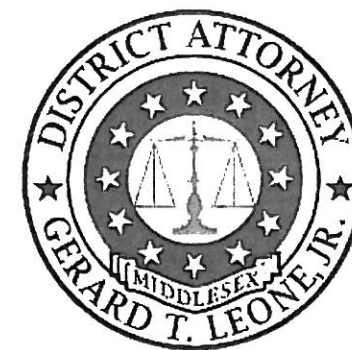
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Online Safety

Internet Tips for Parents

How to Keep Your Kids

Safe on the Internet



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Dear Parents,

We all know that the Internet is an extremely useful tool for us as parents and for our children. Unfortunately, we also know that as the Internet continues to grow, it will also continue to be a haven for predators. Keeping our children safe on the Internet is a constantly-evolving challenge in an anonymous, fluid, and dynamic cyber world.

That is why it is critical for all of us as parents to become involved in working to protect our children online, and to help them protect themselves. The key to all of this can be summed up in one word – *communication*. As parents, we must work to establish a constant and positive line of communication between us and our children about the Web sites they are visiting and who they are talking to online.

This brochure is written for you - to help arm you with the tools and information you need to keep you and your family safe while using and exploring the web. I urge you to use it as a guide to speak to your children about their safe use of the Internet.

Gerard T. Leone, Jr.
Middlesex District Attorney

Online Terms

- ❖ **Blocking software:** Computer programs that filter content from the Internet and block access to some Web sites based on specified criteria.
- ❖ **Bulletin board:** An area of a Web site where users can post messages. In most cases, readers can contact the author of a message by e-mail.
- ❖ **Cache:** A file on a hard drive in which a Web browser stores information from recently visited Web sites, making it faster for the user to revisit a site.
- ❖ **Chat:** A feature offered by many online services or Web sites that allows participants to “chat” by typing messages which are displayed almost instantly on the screens of other participants who are using the chat room.
- ❖ **E-mail:** Written messages sent through a computer to specific groups or individuals. Users can attach files containing graphics, sound, and video.
- ❖ **Filtering software:** Software that screens information on the Internet and classifies its content. Some filtering software allows the user to block access.
- ❖ **IM or Instant Message:** Technology similar to that of chat rooms, which notifies a user when a friend is online, allowing them to “converse” by sending text messages.
- ❖ **Posting:** Sending a message or photo to a discussion group or other public area.

What You Can Do As a Family

- ❖ Make Internet use a family activity. Consider keeping the computer in the family room or other open space rather than in your child’s bedroom.
- ❖ Let your children know that they can talk to you about anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable. Remember, how you respond will determine whether they confide in you next time. Don’t blame them if they receive an inappropriate transmission -- usually, it is out of their control.
- ❖ Be an involved parent. Monitor your child’s online activity just as you would the programs they watch on television, the books they read, or the movies they see.
- ❖ Tell your children not to respond when someone offers them something for nothing online, such as free software or gifts.
- ❖ Remind your children that the people they chat with are still strangers. Because you can’t see or hear people online, it’s easy for an adult to pretend that he or she is a kid. Children should also be reminded that they never should provide personal information to people they do not know and cannot verify.
- ❖ Check out these web sites for information about parental monitoring software:

www.monitoringadvisor.com
www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/onlinesafety.html