



# Stay informed about Cyber Safety! TIPS for PARENTS

Today's kids are online more than ever to stay connected with family and friends, explore new apps and games, and download music and videos. While we know blocking access to the cyber world is not an option let's make sure we educate our youth on how to stay safe online.

## SAFEGUARDS



*Privacy – Content posted online is never private and will stay there indefinitely. Many sites even sell and/or share content posted on their site.*

- Read Terms & Agreements before accepting them and teach your child to do the same.
- Make sure your child uses the highest privacy setting on all accounts.
- Remind your child not to accept friend requests from people they have never met face to face.

*Filters – Consider setting parameters and restrictions for what can be accessed:*

- Time restrictions
- Downloading apps, games and content such as music
- Making purchases including in-app purchases
- Browsing the internet
- Automatic downloads

*Location services – While it is not advised to disable tracking features of mobile devices completely, it is suggested to turn them off for social media, games and camera.*

- Apple devices – settings -> privacy -> location services
- Android devices - settings -> privacy & safety -> location

## INAPPROPRIATE & ILLEGAL CONTENT



Remind your child to be mindful of their digital reputation. Posting inappropriate and/or illegal content may have social, academic and/or criminal consequences.

*Sexting – Sending sexual or provocative images online.*

- If anyone in the photo or video is under the age of 18, it may be a crime to show, send, receive, or forward.
- Teach your child not to take, send, or share sexual or provocative pictures or videos of themselves or others.
- Make sure instances of inappropriate images/videos being shared are reported - Failure to report may be a crime!
- If your child has been affected:
  - + Ask site administrators and perpetrator to remove the image.
  - + Block users who make offensive comments.
  - + Contact law enforcement.
  - + Seek support for those affected.

*Terroristic threats – Threat to commit any crime involving violence to any person or property with intent to cause a reaction, cause fear of serious bodily injury, prevent or interrupt the use of a space.*

- Threats need to be taken seriously and reported, even if the perpetrators claim they are kidding or it is a joke.
- Teach your child to save evidence such as taking screenshots and help them to document any incidents.
- Contact law enforcement.

*Inappropriate content – Kids are curious and will access or can be inadvertently accessed.*

- If your child encounters inappropriate content make sure they know:
  - + To back out and exit.
  - + Not to share with or show minors.
  - + To report unlawful content.

# CONNECTING ONLINE



*Social networking – With countless opportunities for your child to socialize online, help keep them safe by discussing expected behaviors and risks:*

- Research any unknown apps and games.
- Adhere to age requirements on sites and games.

*Cyberbullying – Includes abusive texts or emails, hurtful and/or unlawful content being posted or shared online.*

- Set expectations for online behavior and execute consequences when expectations fail.
- Teach them to be an ally to someone being victimized and not to participate just to “fit in”.
- If your child is being bullied online:
  - + Reassure your child that it is not their fault!
  - + Teach your child how to block users and contacts. Ensure your child then seizes the communication. If the harassment continues contact police!
  - + Save evidence of any incidents with screenshots.
  - + Report the behavior to the site on which it was posted.
  - + Ask for help - schools usually have a policy in place to manage these issues.
  - + Seek counseling if your child shows signs of distress.
  - + Contact police if there is blackmail, threats, extortion or force.

*Unsolicited contact – Strangers and people known to your child may text, message, call, email, private messages through games, social media, apps, etc. Crooks may use pop-ups, prize offers and spam email to lure your child. Make sure your child is fully aware of the following:*

- “Do not respond!”
- “Block, unfriend, discontinue playing game and block that user.”
- “Report unlawful behavior or requests.”
- “Never meet an online friend unless you are with a trusted adult.”
- “Do NOT share personal information such as address, school, phone# etc. nor supply false information.”
- “When in doubt – ask for assistance before responding.”

*Identity theft - Comes in different forms from fake profiles to financial victimization.*

- Remind your child:
  - + to use different screen names for various accounts.
  - + to use secure websites when making purchase (look for “https:” or a padlock on the address bar).
  - + to use caution when downloading content or opening attachments from unfamiliar sights.
- Teach your child to be extra cautious with their password:
  - + Passwords should include upper and lowercase letters, a number and/or a symbol.
  - + Do not use your name or the year you were born in emails, screennames or passwords.
  - + Never share passwords with anyone other than a parent/guardian.
- Keep anti-virus software current.



**Teach your child to trust their instincts and to tell you if anything makes them feel uncomfortable!**

**Teach your child to “ask first” when in doubt and to tell someone when an issue or concern presents itself!**

**Make sure your child knows that it is never their fault if they are victimized!**

## How to Report a Tip



Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)



Text TIPS610 plus tip to  
CRIMES (274637)



Go to [crime-stoppers.org](http://crime-stoppers.org)



Use our **Mobile App**:  
Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston