

CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

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911/EMERGENCY
847-866-5000/NON-EMERGENCY
311/Request City Services or Information
<http://www.cityofevanston.org/police/>



INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS



The Internet can be a wonderful resource for kids. They can use it to research school reports, communicate with teachers and other kids, and play interactive games. Kids who are old enough to punch in a few letters on the keyboard can literally access the world, but that access can also pose hazards. That's why it's important to be aware of what your kids see and hear on the Internet, who they meet, and what they share about themselves online. Just like any safety issue, it's wise to talk with your kids about your concerns, take advantage of resources to protect them, and keep a close eye on their activities.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- **Exposure to Inappropriate Material:**
A child may be exposed to inappropriate material that is sexual, hateful, or violent in nature, or encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal.
- **Physical Molestation:**
Another risk is that, while online, a child might provide information or arrange an encounter that could risk his or her safety. In some cases, pedophiles have used email, bulletin boards, and chat areas to gain a child's confidence and then arrange a face-to-face meeting.
- **Harassment:**
A child might encounter email or chat/bulletin board messages that are harassing, demeaning or belligerent.
- **Financial Risk:**
A child might do something that has negative financial consequences such as giving out a parent's credit card or banking information.

SIGNS THAT A CHILD MIGHT BE AT RISK ONLINE?

- **The child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night**
- **The child's computer has pornography on it**
- **The child receives telephone calls from unknown individuals or makes telephone calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers not recognized by the parent**
- **The child receives gifts, or packages from someone the parent doesn't know**
- **The child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when a parent enters the room. Some children have developed an acronym language intended to trick parents. These acronyms include the following:**

POS – PARENTS OVER SHOULDER
TOS – TEACHER OVER SHOULDER
PAW – PARENTS ARE WATCHING
TAW – TEACHER IS WATCHING
SAW – SIBLINGS ARE WATCHING
CTN – CAN'T TALK NOW
NP – NOSY PARENTS
P911 – MY PARENTS ARE COMING
PA – PARENT ALERT
PAL – PARENTS ARE LISTENING
PAN – PARENTS ARE NEARBY

TO PREVENT & REDUCE THE THREAT OF FALLING VICTIM OF THIS CRIME, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS:

- Keep the computer in a high-traffic area of your home.
- Establish limits for which online sites children may visit and for how long.
- Remember that Internet technology can be mobile, so make sure to monitor cell phones, gaming devices, and laptops.
- Surf the Internet with your children and let them show you what they like to do online.
- Know who is connecting with your children online and set rules for social networking, instant messaging, e-mailing, online gaming, and using webcams.
- Continually dialogue with your children about online safety.

COMPUTER USE RULES FOR CHILDREN:

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parent's work information, or the name and location of my school without my parent's permission.
- I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I 'meet' online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
- I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.
- I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

**PRACTICE
CYBER
SAFETY**

[FOR ADDITIONAL INFO CONTACT THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES BUREAU AT 847-866-5019](#)