



STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Chances are, your child uses a computer, mobile phone and the Internet more regularly than you do. Here are some tips to keep your child safe in an online world that you might not be part of.

Eight ways to keep your online experience a good one:

1 Keep computers out in the open!

Your child might think twice about looking at inappropriate websites, and won't be able to chat to their friends all night while you think they are doing their homework.

2 Mind your business

Remind your child to keep information such as their name, address, phone number, school, and even your credit card number to themselves. When signing up to a chat room, they should use a screen name that is a nickname and not easy to work out. The same goes for choosing passwords - don't make them easy to figure out. If your child is going to put photos on the Internet, ensure they don't show them wearing their school uniform - this can be enough to identify your child's school. Also ensure that any photos are not the type

that would attract unwanted attention from strangers.

3 Just because it's on the Internet, it doesn't mean it's true!

Make sure your child uses multiple sources for research, and is careful not to plagiarise

4 Stranger danger is online too

Ensure your child never organises to meet up with any strangers that they have met online. If they really want to meet up, encourage them to talk to you about it first, and insist on going along with them. Remind your children to also be wary opening emails from strangers too. They could contain spam (online junk mail), a virus (which will harm your computer), or be from a stranger looking for trouble.

5 So get a filter!

Internet filters can help block inappropriate sites for children. You can download a free filter at www.netalert.gov.au. These aren't completely reliable, and it's best if you talk about what websites are appropriate with your child so they understand and make the right choice on their own

6 Encourage your child to talk with you about their online experiences - good and bad

This will make it easier for them if they see something inappropriate or are emailed something unsuitable. If they are embarrassed to tell you, persuade them to at least tell a teacher or another trusted adult.

7 Life online works better when people maintain good manners and treat each other as they'd like to be treated

Talk about this with your child and it may lead to a decline in bullying behaviour, not to mention the many disagreements that children have amongst themselves.

8 Forever is a long time

A lot of blogs and websites maintain information as part of cyberspace forever - long after your child may have changed their minds about "hating boys" or whatever is the hot topic of the day. By publishing without thinking of the future, your child's innocent work online of today may be something that comes up down the track and negatively impacts their career and personal life.

Danger Signs

- Your child constantly sits on the computer in chat rooms or instant messaging, from straight after school to very late at night.
- Your child begins showing unexplained money or items that they might explain as from "a friend you don't know."
- Your child starts to be secretive about what they are doing online - this could include anything from minimising screens as you walk past, to not letting you see their blogs/chat/social media sites.