

- ❖ **Never open an email or click on an attachment from an unknown source.** Opening an attachment from an unknown source can result in your computer being infected with a Virus or Phishing software. Some viruses can crash your computer and/or send viruses to everyone in your address book. Phishing software collects personal information about you, such as passwords, Bank Account Number or Credit Card Information, etc.

### **Safety Tips for parents from the FBI and Department of Justice**

Instruct your children:

- ❖ **To never upload (post) pictures of themselves onto the internet or online** service to people they do not personally know;
- ❖ **To never download pictures from an unknown source**, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit images;
- ❖ **To never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing;**
- ❖ **Whatever they are told online may or may not be true.**

### **Problems? Report Them!**

Internet-related crime should be reported. Consult the following authorities:

- ❖ Cyber Tipline, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, **800-843-5678**  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)
- ❖ Local or State Police
- ❖ Federal Trade Commission  
[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) for consumer fraud
- ❖ U.S. Department of Justice  
[www.justice.gov/criminal/cybercrime](http://www.justice.gov/criminal/cybercrime)
- ❖ Porn spam: contact your U.S. Attorney's office; complain to your Internet Service Provider.

*Crime Prevention Tips From:*

**National Crime Prevention Council**  
2614 Chapel Lake Drive, Suite B  
Gambrills, MD 21054-1637

**Maryland Community  
Crime Prevention Institute**  
6852 4th Street  
Sykesville, MD 21784  
**410-875-3426**



**INTERNET  
SAFETY**

A Family  
Guide



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## ***The Internet can be a wonderful tool for children and youth:***

- ❖ **Homework:** Kids can use the most current news, encyclopedias, and other source materials to find information for research projects.
  - ❖ **Communication:** Kids can use email and public message boards to keep in touch with family and friends.
  - ❖ **Entertainment and education:** Kids can use the Internet to make a virtual visit to a museum, take a college course, play games, etc.
- But the Internet can also be dangerous. Here are some things families can do to encourage today's computer literate young people to be computer-safe.

## ***Using The Computer Is A Family Affair***

- ❖ **Agree on a list of rules and post it by the computer.** The rules should cover how long children can spend on the Internet, how late they can surf the Web, and whether or not they are allowed to make purchases over the Web.
- ❖ **Talk to your kids.** Keep the lines of communication open, and never blame the victim! If a child tells you about an upsetting even experience online, don't blame him or her. How you react will affect how much he or she shares information with you in the future.

- ❖ **Keep the computer in a common room in the house, not in your child's bedroom.** It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household.

## ***Meeting People Online***

- ❖ **As a general rule, children should never plan to meet anyone in person whom they have encountered online.** Explain that people met online may not be who they say they are.
- ❖ **When face-to-face meetings seem appropriate.** The person is a student from a nearby school, for example, the meeting should be arranged only with your approval. It should be in a safe public place, and you or another responsible adult should be present.

- ❖ **Children should never give out their personal information over the internet.** They should use an online name (not their real name) and never reveal their address, telephone number, or any identifying information.
- ❖ **No pictures, letters, or telephone calls should be exchanged with online acquaintances without your approval.**
- ❖ **If online acquaintances send you children email that makes them uncomfortable or that they know is inappropriate, they should inform you at once.** The same applies to information they see on a social networking site or service.

## ***Following Links***

- ❖ **Consider using a family-safe or child-safe search engine or a filter, blocking, or ratings system.** Some services have a "kids only" section so you can be sure the children won't have access to questionable material.
- ❖ **Encourage your children to ask you to check out new sites with them.**
- ❖ **Be responsive and nonjudgmental if they tell you about an inappropriate site they found accidentally.**

## ***Downloading From The Internet***

- The internet has changed the way children do schoolwork. But they need to realize that information they find on the internet is not all free. Be sure they understand the following:
- ❖ **Teachers can easily determine** if an assignment - or even one paragraph of an assignment - has been downloaded from the Internet instead of written by the student.
  - ❖ **Children must rewrite and paraphrase,** not just copy material from the Internet. They must always include proper citation when they are using other people's work.
  - ❖ **It is against the law to copy or download some types of information or music from the Internet without permission.**