

Internet Tips for Teens

SOURCE: *Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire*

- 1) Be smart about what you post on the Web and what you say to others. The Web is a lot more public and permanent than it seems.
- 2) Provocative and “sexy” names and pictures can draw attention from people you don’t want in your life.
- 3) Sexy pictures can get you into trouble with the law. If you are underage, they may be considered child pornography, a serious crime.
- 4) Be careful what you download or look at, even for a laugh. Some of the images on the Internet are extreme, and you can’t “unsee” something.
- 5) Going to sex chat rooms and other sex sites may connect you with people who can harass you in ways you don't anticipate.
- 6) Free downloads and file-sharing can put pornography on your computer that you may not want and can be hard to get rid of. Any pornography that shows children or teens under 18 is illegal child pornography and can get you in big trouble.
- 7) Adults who talk to you about sex online are committing a crime. So are adults who meet underage teens for sex. Some teens think it might be fun, harmless, or romantic, but it means serious trouble for everyone. It’s best to report it.
- 8) Don't play along with people on the Web who are acting badly, taking risks and being weird. Even if you think it's harmless and feel like you can handle it, it only encourages them and may endanger other young people.
- 9) Report it when other people are acting weird and inappropriately or harassing you or others. It's less trouble just to log off, but these people may be dangerous. Save the communication. Contact the site management, your service provider, the CyberTipline or even the police.
- 10) Don't let friends influence your Catholic values and your better judgment. If you are surfing with other kids, don't let them pressure you to do things you ordinarily wouldn't.
- 11) Be careful if you ever go to meet someone you have gotten to know through the Internet. You may think you know them well, but they may fool you. Go with a friend. Tell your parents. Meet in a public place. Make sure you have your cell phone and an exit plan.
- 12) Don’t harass others. People may retaliate in ways you don’t expect.

- 13) You can overestimate your ability to handle things. It may feel like you are careful, savvy, aware of dangers, and able to manage the risks you take, but there are always unknowns. Don't risk disasters.

Online/Electronic Safety Pact

I UNDERSTAND there are responsibilities associated with use of online and electronic communication.

I WILL not share too much personal information online.

I WILL get permission from my parents first if I want to provide personal information to enter a contest, register on a website, or buy something online.

I WILL NOT send threatening, unkind or disrespectful e-mail, IM's, or text messages, nor post them on websites, blogs, online bulletin boards, or any other public forum.

I WILL NOT send inappropriate (nude or semi-nude) photographs, video clips or other images of myself online or electronically.

I WILL NOT respond to inappropriate or violent e-mail or text messages. I WILL report these to my parents, www.cybertipline.com, and/or the phone company.

I UNDERSTAND that private and family matters should not be discussed online. I should talk about them with a trusted adult instead (i.e., school counselor, friend's parents, clergy).

I WILL NOT go alone to meet in-person someone I know only from online, because it could be dangerous. If I really want to meet an online acquaintance F2F, I WILL:

- a. Only go with my parent(s) or another trusted adult AND
- b. Meet the person in a public place.

I UNDERSTAND that my online footprint will follow me throughout life. My actions today will last far into the future.

I UNDERSTAND that parents or guardians may monitor me because they love me and want to ensure my safety.

I UNDERSTAND that breaking this Safety Pact is not an option, because doing so could put my personal safety at risk.

Child's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date