

YOUTH GUIDE ON EXPLOITATION AND DIGITAL SAFETY



BE AWARE



THE INTERNET CAN BE FUN... BUT IT CAN ALSO BE DANGEROUS. NOT EVERYONE ONLINE IS WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE!



ONLINE INTERACTION



- Using apps can be fun but can also be very dangerous, so you should **be very careful about who you let into your friends' circle.**
- You should only interact with people online that you know in real life.
- Don't add friends and followers you don't know online just to increase your following.
- **Friendship is not a button you click online.** That's not going to build a relationship with someone you can trust. It can lead to you being taken advantage of.
- Don't interact with people online in games, messages, or on any app that you've never met.



NEVER go meet someone in person who you've only met online.



• **Never share any personal information with anyone who is not your close friend.**



• You may feel like no one understands you, and you feel insecure and lonely. You want to be relatable, so that makes you want to seek out someone online to make you feel like you're special and you fit in.

But that's not safe.

THE INTERNET IS FOREVER!



BE SMART

**Be Careful What You Share!
Protect Your Privacy!
Protect Yourself!**

ONLINE GROOMING IS REAL

- There are people on the internet that want to control you and hurt you.
- They can trick you into doing things you wouldn't usually do. They will use guilt to force you to keep doing it, by threatening to tell your friends and family.

There are a lot of creeps and predators online who are very dangerous. They build up trust and trick you into thinking that they are safe... but they are not!



CYBERBULLYING

- Cyberbullying is when someone online is aggressively threatening or being mean-spirited towards you.
- This includes body shaming, sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean, hate/biased speech against you.
- There are a lot of people out there that try to talk to you cause they're just trolls or bullies.
- Sketchy people gain knowledge of your likes, habits, hopes, dreams, and even hurts. They try to discover these things to use them against you.
- If you're being bullied online, always report it to the social media platform, block them, and tell a trusted adult.

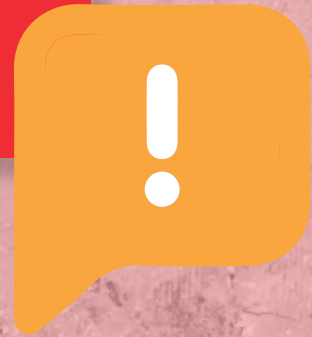
- **Never share any personal information with anyone** – where you live, go to school, birthday, anything!

PROTECT YOURSELF

- You have no way of knowing who is looking at what you post online or have sent to people in private messages.
- Never post or share anything online that you wouldn't want to be printed out and posted all over your school.
- Once you post and share something online, you are no longer in control of who sees it.



SEXTING IS DANGEROUS!



WHAT IS SEXTING?

Sexting happens when someone sends sexually graphic images or messages to another person.



You should **NEVER** sext or share nude or inappropriate photos or videos of yourself – with anyone. No matter what! It's against the law to make, send, or receive nudes for anyone under the age of 18.

Once an image is sent to someone else, it's just about impossible to get it back.

These images will live online forever.



Sadly, there are instances (“revenge porn”) where someone shares photos or videos meant only for them, sometimes after a breakup.



The moment you put images or videos out there, you are no longer in control...it's in their control.

If a stranger asks you to take a revealing image, it could be a scam that could lead to further demands and threats (“sextortion”). Do not respond, block them, and tell a trusted adult!

**ONE PHOTO OR VIDEO
COULD RUIN YOUR
ENTIRE FUTURE!**

Even if you want to send it to someone you care about, **don't do it!**
It's that simple!

SET BOUNDARIES

Set boundaries between yourself and the digital world to protect your digital wellness.

If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult and unfriend or block the source.

- Most apps and games are designed to be addictive. They design them to make you want to never stop using them.
- It's okay not to comment or respond to people instantly.



Sometimes you may feel pressured to always be connected. That can be unhealthy. You don't always have to be on your device. Take a break and do something else you enjoy.

- People like to paint a perfect picture of their lives on social media. It's not real. It's fake. **It's ok if your online life doesn't look perfect.**
- **Encourage your close friends to put their phones down so you can actually talk and look out for each other.**
- If you feel lonely or depressed, talk to someone you trust like your parent or guardian, best friend, or teacher. They can help!
- **Always trust yourself when you're online! Trust what you feel – if something doesn't feel right, pay attention to your instinct! You have control over YOU!**



ONLINE APPS, GAMING, AND PRIVACY



- You have to work hard to protect your privacy online.
- **Never trust default privacy settings.**
- Make sure you check the privacy setting on any app or website you use. Ensure your privacy is protected before using any app, gaming device, or website.
- **Some apps say that the data is deleted, but it's not and can be used against you!**
- Never create usernames that are exact or similar to your real name.
- **Never reveal any information that could be personally identifiable.**



Predators take bits and pieces of information from games and other sources to access additional information about you. They will use this information to contact you with inappropriate messaging, or even face-to-face meetings that could lead to something dangerous.

BE SAFE! ▶▶▶

**NEVER GO MEET SOMEONE
IN PERSON THAT YOU'VE
ONLY MET ONLINE.**

- **Don't tell people online where you are, where you're going, or where you're taking a vacation.** This can be used to track you by online predators.
- **Assume the whole world will read your posts.** Never post something online that would make it easy for a stranger to find you.
- You could stumble on photos or videos that you shouldn't see. Don't follow anyone who says inappropriate things or posts inappropriate photos.
- If you see something inappropriate or feel weird, tell a trusted parent, friend, or counselor.





BUYING DRUGS ONLINE

It's not only illegal to purchase illicit drugs online, but it is EXTREMELY dangerous!

- Most often, you are not getting the drug you intended to purchase.
- Unknowingly, you can be sold and ingest drugs laced with lethal substances, like fentanyl. Fentanyl is added to pills incorrectly labeled as common pain, antianxiety, ADHD, or other prescription medications, potentially leading to overdose and even death.
- **The smallest dose of a drug laced with Fentanyl can kill you in a matter of minutes.**
- **The safest thing to do is NEVER buy any type of drugs online!**

PORNOGRAPHY

XXX

- In today's digital world, pornography is easily accessible on any digital device.
- **Porn is NOT an accurate depiction of love** and can lead to bad online habits which carry over to your real life.
- **Watching porn can lead to a dangerous addiction!**

You always have the power to say NO!

You are in control of your life. That goes 100% for your life online.

Never do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

SAFETY TIPS

HAVE AN EXIT PLAN

- If someone is bullying you or talking to you in a way you don't like, then simply unfriend/unfollow, or block them.
- **You have all the control when it comes to your online experience.**
- Stay in control of every aspect of your digital life. Pictures. Posts. Comments. Videos.
- **Never hesitate to tell a trusted adult if something happens online that makes you uncomfortable.**

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS

Only share your profile and use social media or gaming to connect with people you actually know in person; deny any requests from those you don't. **Unfriend, unfollow, or block those in your friends list that you don't know in person.**



TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT

If you ever feel uncomfortable or think something is sketchy, tell a **trusted adult**. Whether it's a parent, faith leader, healthcare provider, teacher, coach, or school counselor. It's better to talk to someone about an issue when it happens, even if it's difficult to share. Talking about it now could keep it from becoming a bigger problem in the future.



REPORT/BLOCK SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms provide tips to help protect you from cyberbullying and hate speech. If you are being bullied and someone is out to cause harm to you, or others, immediately tell a trusted adult so it can be reported before anyone gets hurt. **You can also unfriend/unfollow and block anyone who is causing you harm. Report it to the social media platform.**



RED FLAGS

When communicating with someone online, here are some red flags that someone may use to take advantage of you.

- They DM you and say, "Let's go private."
- They ask if you're alone and want to know private information about you.
- They will say anything you want to hear like, "I understand how you feel, I can help you." Or "want to earn some money fast?"
- They send you links to inappropriate things or send you sexual images or videos.
- They ask for nudes.
- They want to meet you in person.
- They tell you a "secret" and then tell you to not tell anyone and you can trust them. Once there's a secret, bad people use this secret to create guilt, shame, and dependence on them which can lead to more damaging scenarios down the road.





Watch our Digital Safety Videos
and share with your friends.



If you, or someone you know, is being exploited online, contact the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

800-THE LOST (800-843-5678) or report at Cyber Tipline at www.cybertipline.com.

#NEED HELP

NCMEC's CyberTipLine is the nation's centralized reporting system for the online exploitation of minors. All tips remain confidential. Available 24/7.

[NetSmartz](#) is NCMEC's online safety education program that provides age-appropriate videos and activities to help show you how to be safer online. We

want you to be aware of potential online risks and empower you to make safer choices on- and offline.



Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between 10 to 24. Sometimes it feels as though your struggle is being underestimated by your age. But we hear you, and help is available. Don't be afraid to reach out to friends and trusted adults in your life for support.

You can call the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](tel:988) any time – calls are confidential.

LEARN MORE AT: ctf.alabama.gov/digital-safety

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