Social networking and internet safety tips

Best internet practices for kids

- Keep all your personal information to yourself.
- Do not give out your picture or post it online.
- Use a neutral and appropriate screen name.
- Do not give out your passwords.
- Do not trust everyone you meet online.
- If you come across anything that makes you uncomfortable, tell your parents.
- Meeting someone in person that you met online can be extremely dangerous. Ask parents before meeting an online buddy in public.

Best Internet practices for parents

- Create rules for internet use in the home. Set up parental controls, including blocking of certain websites.
- Know what your kids are doing online. Speak with them about inherent dangers of unsafe usage.
- Communicate with your kids. Speak with them about the internet and what they should and should not do online. Ask what they like to do online and watch their favorite online videos.
- Use the internet with your kids. Practice safe surfing. For further information, visit the FBI's Safe Online Surfing program at https://sos.fbi.gov/.
- Do not allow solitary surfing.
- Desktop and laptop computers should be set up in an open area within the home so you can personally monitor your child's internet activity.
- Kids should never be allowed to go online behind a closed bedroom door.
- If your kids refuse to follow the computer rules you set up, take away their computer use privilege.
- If you agree to let your child meet an online buddy in person (which can potentially be dangerous), go with them.
- Do not rely solely on technology as a substitute for you. Be involved!
- Safeguard your home computers, including filtering applications, anti-virus software and internet monitoring software.
- Do not discount the fact that your child is not being completely truthful with you about their online activities. For example, it is not uncommon for kids to have one "sanitized" social media page/messaging platform for their parents to review and a completely different social media page/messaging platform for their friends.

Risky online decisions

- "Friending" unknown people. Friending online can be a popularity contest with adolescents to see who has the most friends on a given social media platform. This can allow threat actors to get closer to their target and those associated with them.
- Sending or posting provocative and sexual images.
- Clicking on pop-ups.
- Talking about sex.

- Posting personal information.
- Sharing passwords with friends.
- Embarrassing or harassing people.

Engaging in the above types of behavior can ultimately lead to becoming a sexting, sextortion and/or cyber bullying/harassment victim or criminal suspect. These types of activity could attract online predators. If you believe you are being targeted by an online predator, tell someone you trust immediately! For more information, visit the FBI's sextortion website www.fbi.gov/news/stories/sextortion.

For more information, contact the police department's community outreach at 952.924.2661 or visit the Federal Trade Commission's website at www.ftc.gov.