Online Safety Tips

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INTERNET ESSENTIALS from Comcast

Online Safety

So much happens online. You watch videos, chat with your friends, laugh at funny memes. And even though you already know how to avoid creeps and what to do if there's too much drama, sometimes life online gets tricky. That's when tips about being safe online, avoiding cyberbullying, and steering clear of social media problems can come in handy.

What You'll Find in This Guide:
- **Online Safety**
- **Cyberbullying**
- **Social Media Basics**
- **Digital Dilemmas:**
  - **Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing**
  - **Cyberbullying**
  - **Digital Drama**
  - **Sexting & Nude Photographs**

About Common Sense Media
Common Sense Media is the nation's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in a world of media and technology. We offer the largest library of independent age-based ratings and reviews for movies, TV shows, books, games, apps, and more, as well as expert advice. From tips on popular apps and games to resources for first-time technology users, Common Sense Media is the trusted source of information for parents and caregivers when it comes to raising kids in the digital age.

About Our Partnership
Since 2007, Common Sense Media's content has empowered and enhanced experiences for family customers across Comcast platforms, including Internet Essentials, X1, and Xfinity Latino. The Learning Center on InternetEssentials.com features our robust advice content and videos related to online safety, social media, and digital literacy, empowering all families to navigate the world of media and technology with confidence.

Common Sense Media age ratings and in-depth reviews for movies and TV can be found in the Parental Guide tab in X1 to help families find quality content faster. Our parent tip videos can be discovered in On Demand destinations and our age ratings power filtering in Kids Zone, making browsing safe and appropriate for kids of all ages.

Online Safety

HELP!

Follow your family's rules about when and where to use the internet.

Never share your name, your school's name, your age, your phone number, or your email or home address with strangers.

Understand a website's rules, and know how to flag other users for misbehavior.

Keep passwords private (except from parents).

Be polite, kind, and respectful.

Never send pictures to strangers.

Recognize red flags, including someone asking personal questions such as your name and address.

Never open a message from a stranger; it may contain a virus that can harm your device.

Immediately tell an adult if something mean or creepy happens.

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Cyberbullying

Social Media Basics

If you have experience with cyberbullying, you know how intense it can get. Maybe you've figured out your own methods for dealing with it or you've been able to avoid it altogether. That's great. If you need ideas for how to deal with cyberbullying, check out these tips below:

By high school, you already understand the basics of thinking before you post, being kind online, and using privacy settings on all your apps and sites. But there are a few more things to consider when using social media:

Avoid drama.
You know the kids who are alway stirring up drama. Steer clear of them and the places they hang out. Some apps or websites — especially anonymous ones — can amp up cruel behavior. As tempting as it might be to dive into the drama, resist the urge.

Make friends.
Find friends who are focused on positive activities and support each other. Allies are important, especially if you're the target of bullying.

Dial it down.
Be aware of what can escalate drama into bullying. Some things can turn from funny to mean quickly. Or something that was private can go public. Sometimes an incident between two people becomes bigger when more people get involved. Avoid being part of the problem by choosing not to spread mean stuff online.

Deal with it.
If you're the target of a cyberbully, you have some choices about what to do. First, take a breath. Don't make any rash decisions while you're feeling super upset. Then, consider these steps:

- Ignore and block the bully. Often bullies are looking for a reaction or attention. Don't give it to them.

- Save the evidence. You may need it later if you decide to take action.

- Change your privacy settings. Make sure only friends can see or respond to your posts.

- Tell a trusted adult or friend. If it's super bad, you should get an adult involved. If you think you can manage it yourself, make sure you have someone to talk to who can support you.

Think about your online reputation.
Remember that anyone can see what you post online — even if you think no one will. Potential employers and college admissions staff often browse social networking sites. Think about who might see your pages and how others might interpret your posts or photos.

Anything you create or communicate can be cut, altered, pasted, and sent around.
Once you put something online, it's out of your control. It can be taken out of context and used to hurt you or someone else. This includes writing as well as photos of sex, drugs, and alcohol. Online stuff can last forever. If you wouldn't put something on the wall of the school hallway, you shouldn't post it online.

Avoid drama.
Don't forward harmful messages or embarrassing photos, and don't impersonate other people by using their accounts or devices or creating fake pages.

Don't post your location.
Social networks allow you to post your locations, and, although it might be tempting to use these features to connect with friends, it's just not safe.

Watch the clock.
Social networking sites are designed to keep you online. Hours and hours can go by, which isn't great for getting homework done, practicing sports or music, reading, or just having a life.

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Digital Dilemmas

These scenarios can help you think about how you would handle similar situations. Read through the descriptions and then answer the questions. If you're not sure how you would handle something, consider talking to your parent, a teacher, or a friend to brainstorm ideas for managing the situation.

Digital Footprints & Photo Sharing

Cyberbullying

TAKE IT DOWN!

When Vin sent his friend an embarrasing Snap, he hadn't expected that his friend would take a screenshot of the picture and post it on Facebook. He didn't want to seem uptight, but he was pretty embarrassed that the picture was posted for all to see. He texted his friend, "Not cool, man. Take it down." His screen lit up: "hahahah." Vin texted back, "Nah, I'm not playing, take it off." His friend wrote back, "Whoa, chill out, I'm just playing," but he didn't take the picture down. Vin was about to go through recruiting for college sports, and while he knew the picture wouldn't get him in trouble, it wasn't exactly the image he wanted recruiters to see.

What is your gut reaction to this story?

How do you decide which pictures are OK to share on social media and which pictures should stay offline?

What kinds of pictures do kids screenshot?

Are there any pictures that you wouldn't mind sharing now but you wouldn't want attached to your name later in life?

Is it reasonable for Vin to be concerned about the recruiters? What kinds of content do you think the recruiters would or wouldn't want to see if they searched for Vin online?

What would you do if you were in this situation and your friend refused to take down the picture?

FAKE PAGES

Mackayla looked away from her computer screen in disbelief. One of her friends had just sent Mackayla the link to a vicious fake page … of Mackayla's younger sister, Remy. Someone — she had no idea who was behind it — had used Remy's picture and name to make a fake account. They filled out all of the "About me" sections making fun of Remy's interests, hobbies, and even her style and appearance. All of the tagged pictures were Photoshopped pictures of Remy's head on embarrassing bodies. One picture showed Remy's face on the body of a very overweight older man, and another had Remy's head on the body of a nearly naked bikini model. Even worse, it looked like the fake page had "friended" more than half of Remy's grade. Mackayla remembered that Remy had mentioned having some issues at school and had even come home crying a couple of times, but she hadn't realized it had gotten this bad. Mackayla didn't know if Remy had seen the page yet, but she was devastated and knew that Remy would be, too.

What seems realistic (or unrealistic) about this story? Do you ever hear about this kind of thing happening?

What can Mackayla do now that she has seen the page? What would you do if you were Remy's older sister and saw the page?

Do you think this is a case of "cyberbullying"? Why, or why not?

What can different people — Remy's parents, her school, her friends — each do to help Remy get through this experience?

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IMPERSONATION

Erin was home sick from school watching a movie when she looked down at her phone and saw her screen filled with text messages written in capital letters and punctuated with exclamation points: "I HATE YOU!!! HOW COULD YOU?!" Erin panicked: She had no idea why she was receiving the flood of vicious text messages. She frantically texted two of her friends, but both were in class, and her calls went to voicemail. A few hours later, Erin pieced together what had happened. Someone had hacked onto her best friend's Facebook page, acting as her, and sent perverted messages to her best friend's boyfriend. Her best friend was furious and was convinced that it was Erin, since Erin was the only person who had her password. Erin hadn't been at school to defend herself, so their other friends had already heard about the incident and were mad at Erin, too.

What is your gut reaction to this story?

Is sharing passwords something that people you know do? Who would you share your Facebook password with and under what circumstances?

What would you do in this situation if you were Erin?

Is impersonation something you ever see on social media? Are there ever situations when this is funny or just a joke?

PROVE YOU TRUST ME

Devon opened his cellphone and saw a picture of a girl without a shirt on. He couldn't see her face but saw the text message sent with the picture: "Fwd if you think Rachil is a slut!" Rachil was in Devon's Spanish class, and he immediately cringed, imagining how ugly this was going to be for Rachil at school tomorrow. Rachil had sent the picture to her ex-boyfriend, Jose, because he promised they would get back together if she proved she trusted him. She sent it to him, and they got back together, but a few days later they got into another fight and broke up. Jose forwarded the picture to his friends. Then the picture spread like wildfire.

What is your gut reaction to this story? Which parts of the story seem most realistic to you?

Why do you think Rachil decided to send the picture?

What is a misconception you think adults have about sexting?

What would you have done in this situation if you didn't know Rachil? If you were Rachil's friend? If you were Rachil herself?

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Learn more, visit **www.InternetEssentials.com/Safety**.