Basic Internet Safety

The Internet has drastically changed the way that children interact with the world. They have 24/7 access to in-depth knowledge, tools to express their creativity, and interact with people from all over the world. While offering a fascinating and novel way to connect with the world, the Internet also offers new risks.

Learning to recognize the warning signs of these risks will allow trusted adults to intervene and lessen potential negative impacts. By acting as a resource, parents and guardians can help make the Internet a safer place for their families. As a parent or guardian, you could stay well-informed about current issues to understand what your children are experiencing on and off the Internet. If they are social networking, instant messaging, using webcams, or blogging, help them use these tools safely by learning how to use them yourself.
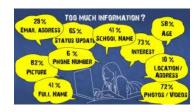
Children whose parents and guardians regularly talk to them about personal safety are more likely to exhibit responsible behaviour on their own

Examples of risks that the Internet posts

- **Cyberbullying**
- **Exposure to inappropriate material**
- **Online predators**
- **Revealing too much personal information**

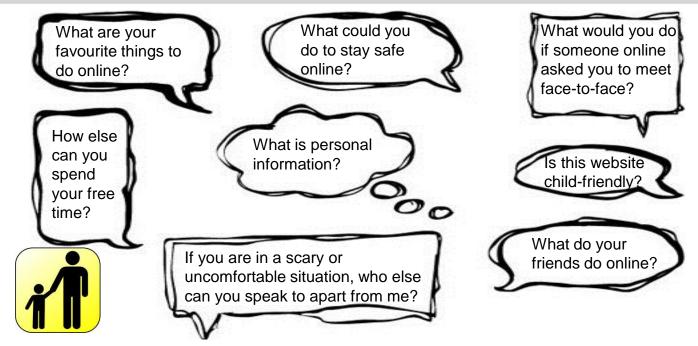## The basics of internet safety for concerned parents/guardians

- Keep the computer in a high-traffic area of your home
- Establish limits for which online sites children may visit and for how long
- Remember that Internet technology can be mobile, so make sure to monitor cell phones, gaming devices, and laptops
- Surf the Internet with your children and let them show you what they like to do online
- Know who is connecting with your children online and set rules for social networking, instant messaging, e-mailing, online gaming, and using webcams
- Continually dialogue with your children about online safety

Source: http://www.netsmartz.org/InternetSafety

Checklist for Online Safety ✓

- ❑ I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number without my parents' permission.

- ❑ I will tell my parents right away if I come across something that makes me feel uncomfortable.

- ❑ I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring a parent along.

- ❑ I will talk to my parents about posting pictures of myself or others online and not post any pictures that my parents consider to be inappropriate.

- ❑ I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away.

- ❑ I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online and using a mobile phone. We will decide the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online and appropriate sites for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

- ❑ I will not give out my passwords to anyone (even my best friends) other than my parents.

- ❑ I will check with my parents before downloading or installing software or doing anything that could possibly hurt our computer or mobile device or jeopardize my family's privacy.

- ❑ I will be a good online citizen and not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law.

- ❑ I will help my parents understand how to have fun and learn things online and teach them things about the Internet, computers and other technology.

Start a discussion with your child

What are your favourite things to do online?

What could you do to stay safe online?

What would you do if someone online asked you to meet face-to-face?

How else can you spend your free time?

What is personal information?

Is this website child-friendly?

If you are in a scary or uncomfortable situation, who else can you speak to apart from me?

What do your friends do online?