



Guidelines for Students Regarding Internet Usage

1. Why is it important to stay safe online?

Most of us are 'connected' via our laptops, mobile phones, tablets or personal computer. The potential for the internet to be a valuable and a fun resource for entertainment, making friends, keeping in touch and learning is vast. But if you use the internet, you could be at risk of illegal activity or abuse - be it bullying, fraud or something more serious. Unlike seeing someone face-to-face, on the net, people aren't always what they first seem.

In the same way you learn about safety when you leave the house, it is important to learn how to stay safe online. These are skills that will stay with you for life.

2. GOLDEN RULES

- Don't give out personal information, such as your address or phone number.
- Don't send pictures of yourself to anyone, especially inappropriate pictures.
- Don't open e-mails or attachments from people you don't know.
- Don't become online 'friends' with people you don't know.
- Never arrange to meet someone in person whom you've met online.
- If anything, you see or read online worries you, tell someone about it.

3. SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking websites and apps, such as Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, Viber, Tumblr, SnapChat and Twitter have become incredibly popular in recent years.

Most users are genuine but because it is so easy to hide your real identity, it is possible to meet people you would normally avoid.

4. THE RISKS

Privacy

The internet offers you a lot of freedom and this can lead some people to behave in ways they would not usually behave in public.

They might:

- say things on a status update / post / tweet they would never say face-to-face
- give out personal information about themselves or others (including photos) that they would normally keep private.

A common example

A young person tries to let their friends know about their birthday party by posting the information about when and where on their social networking site. This means hundreds of people end up knowing about the party and arrive uninvited. The party could lead to chaos with people displaying many negative emotions and even refusing to leave. The police would have to get involved to turn people away.

5. CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying can work in the same way as bullying in the playground; the victim feels frightened and alone, while the bully tries to hide from being caught.

- Comments, images and videos about a person can be posted online, causing the victim to feel frightened and upset.
- It is even possible for cyber bullies to hack into the victim's personal accounts and harass them from within their own user profile.
- Often cyber bullies feel braver as they can't be seen but it can be the most traceable form of bullying because there's evidence of what has happened.
- Because bullies think they can cover up their identity online sometimes, people who wouldn't normally bully, might do so online.

6. CYBER STALKING

Harassment on the internet can be just as frightening as other forms of stalking.

- Although women and girls are usually the victims of this kind of behaviour, anyone can become a victim.
- They might be harassed by an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend who is upset about the end of their relationship, for example.
- It can also begin when a purely online friendship turns sour.
- It can even begin entirely at random, by one online stranger towards another.

7. IDENTITY THEFT

The more information you make available online, the greater the risk of identity theft. It can be very tempting to reply to an e-mail, open an attachment or post information about yourself on social networking sites, but you should never do it.

Personal information includes:

- e-mail address
- phone number
- postal address
- any banking information
- photos of yourself

The consequences of fraud can be immense, so you should be aware of the very serious risks. If someone steals your or your parents' identity, they can:

- steal a lot of money
- commit crimes that could put you or your parents in danger
- commit crimes that you or your parents could get into trouble for.

8. MAKING 'FRIENDS'

We all know that it is not healthy to spend hours and hours in front of a computer screen. But another problem with social networking is the pressure you can feel to make sure you have lots of 'friends'. But here are some things to remember:

- friendships formed online are made by clicking a button, rather than talking to people and sharing experiences.
- being online 'friends' with someone is much less meaningful than face-to-face friendship.
- you can easily fall out with an online 'friend' because of a misunderstood comment.
- it is far easier, and healthier, to sort out arguments and problems when you can talk to someone face to face.

So, although you might know someone who likes to boast about how many 'friends' they've got on their social networking site, remember that real friendships aren't formed by computers.

Tips to stay safe on social networking sites:

- Make sure your age is appropriate to the social network regulations.
- Maybe use a made-up name or nickname on your profile.
- Never give out personal information.
- Do not make friends you don't already know personally.
- Maybe use an e-mail address that does not include your name.
- Always use a 'strong' password. That is, don't use any names or words that someone might guess, like the name of your dog or your favourite singer. Use random letters or numbers and change your password regularly.
- Use the strongest privacy setting when you set up your profile. This means that only your friends will be able to view your information.
- Pictures and videos can be shared very easily across the internet, so make sure you are very careful when uploading — even if you only share it with friends, it can easily be spread much further than that.
- Be very careful about sharing content online, especially if it isn't yours to share. Illegal downloads should be avoided.
- Never meet up with anyone you have met online.
- Make sure you know about the safety features on any networking site. Some, for example, have a 'panic button' which you can press if you see something that shouldn't be there.
- If anything happens online that you don't like, tell someone.

9. OTHER TYPES OF INTERNET USE

E-mails, Spam, Phishing and Viruses

- Spam — unsolicited bulk messages, especially advertising.
- Phishing — the act of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details.

- Viruses/Adware/Malware — programs that may be harmful to your computer.

If you have an e-mail address, at some point you might receive a message from someone you don't know. They could be:

- selling something (this is called a 'spam' e-mail)
- sending you a virus
- sending you an attachment (in most cases contain a virus, adware or malware)
- sending abusive or explicit content.

The golden rule is, if the e-mail is from someone you don't know, delete it.

- If it is spam, your computer might get infected.
- If it is a virus, your computer might get damaged.
- If it is an attachment, it might contain a virus, or it might be something you don't want to see. You will have to pay to remove it from your computer.
- If it is abusive or explicit, it might upset you or even get you into trouble.

You can avoid unwanted e-mails by getting the right software. This is something for an adult to sort out, but you might know more about it than them already, so help them out.

10. CONCLUSION

The basic message that children have to understand is: the Internet can become a very useful tool if you use it wisely.

Some people are using internet for their survival and not for fun.

For example, Julius Yego, a Kenyan athlete, wanted to become a javelin athlete but he had a small problem. He didn't know how to throw the javelin. He used the internet and YouTube to learn how to do it. At the 2012 Olympics, he won the gold medal throwing at 92.72 metres which is the 3rd best in history. When he revealed this story, he became known as MR. YOU TUBE JULIUS YEGO.

You can find this video on the following link.

Julius Yego - Mr YouTube - Olympics 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clUvbObfz0>

To summarise, we can see that if the Internet is used for a good reason, it can have great results.