INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

Parents and caring adults can help ensure the safety of children while online by reviewing and enforcing the following guidelines.

ESTABLISH RULES FOR INTERNET USE

- Define which sites your child can visit.
- Identify safe online friends and networks for your child.
- Set time limits on computers and digital devices.
- Clearly define when and where they can use all digital devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets, laptops, digital readers, gaming devices, etc.).
- Establish a family "charging station" where all digital devices are charged overnight.
- Keep the house rules posted near the family computer and family charging station.

KEEP THE COMPUTER IN A COMMON ROOM — NOT IN A CHILD'S BEDROOM!

COMMUNICATE

- Prepare yourself before talking with your kids and teens.
- Be open with your children and teach them by example how to make responsible choices online.
- Stay calm. Encourage them to confide in you.
- Warn your children about the potential risks on Facebook and other social media sites.
- Discuss the importance of telling you or another trusted adult if anything ever makes your child or teen feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused while online.
- Talk to your children about what personal information is and why it should never be shared online without your permission.

REPORT SUSPICIOUS OR UNWANTED ONLINE BEHAVIOR

- REPORT suspicious persons or websites!
- Notify local law enforcement.
- Use the CyberTipline at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1.800.843.5678 or www.cybertipline.com).
- When anything or anyone makes your child feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, show him/her how to turn off the screen or close the device (do not turn off computers). Then, REPORT!

We bring hope and healing to the missing and their families through crisis intervention, prevention, and community education.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE ONLINE

- Don't forward emails to everyone on your contact list.
- Don't post your child's email address or screen name in any directory.
- Be aware of spamming techniques and report unwanted emails.
- Don't sign up for free things.

BE INFORMED

- Learn everything you can about digital and social media trends.
- Ask your kids to show you places they go online.
- Learn how to set parental controls.
- Know with whom your child texts or chats online.
- Learn how to check texting history and search histories.
- Use the internet to identify local predators by name and/or address/zip code and warn your children. Search www.nsopr.gov AND records.txdps.state.tx.us.
- Always read a website's privacy policy.

CONSIDER SAFEGUARDING OPTIONS

- Research blocking, filtering, and rating applications.
- Learn about filtering and monitoring software and WHEN TO USE THEM.

MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S ONLINE LIFE

- Review your child's friends lists and social media contact lists with them. Make sure they can put a face to EVERY name on EACH list.
- Check your children's email addresses and screen names for appropriateness.
- Make sure you are aware of any other places your child may be using the internet such as a friend's house, school, library, gaming device, or cell phone.
- Make sure children only exchange email/texts/online social media communications with people they know.
- Review the history of all digital devices (including online gaming consoles) for deleted texts. A deleted text history is an indicator of risky online behavior.
- Monitor your child's use of texting and instant messaging (IM'ing). Excessive IM'ing or texting can be dangerous.