

## Cecil Jones E-Safety

### Social Media Safety Tips for Kids and Their Parents

\*\*\* New mobile app to be aware about \*\*\*

A new website/App has been released and its popularity is increasing. The App is called "Yellow" and can be downloaded on Android and Apple phones, so far it has over 7 million users. The site can be linked with Mucisal. ly, Snapchat and Houseparty and it is a free download and all it asks for is a date of birth which can be made up. The app is being described as the "Teenage Tinder" and promotes images to be shared and group chat.

#### **No Underage Facebooking**

Did you know that no one under the age of 13 is permitted to join Facebook? However, there is no real way for Facebook to truly enforce it, because anyone can lie about their year of birth. You need to make sure that your child stays away from Facebook until 13 AND until you are comfortable with him or her having an account. There are measures put in place, such as reporting an underage child, but ultimately, it should be the parent who has the say on when and if that account gets created.

#### **Check Privacy Settings**

Check that your privacy settings for the Internet and Facebook are set to the strictest levels. Depending on which browser you are using, you can adjust the settings directly from the options tab and adjust levels around cookies, third party sites and more. This not only protects the computer user, but also the computer from the threat of viruses. Checking your Facebook privacy settings is easy as well.

#### **Create Ground Rules**

If your kids are old enough to be using the computer on their own, they are old enough to understand that there are rules they need to abide by. Breaking them should not have a lesser consequence than if they broke a rule in the offline world. The best way for families to agree on ground rules is to create a contract that all parties must sign. [The Family Online Safety Institute](#) (FOSI) encourages parents and kids to have an open discussion about what these rules mean, and offers a good example of a contract [here](#).

#### **Get To Know What Your Child's Habits Are**

You don't need to be a super sleuth and spy on your kid's every online move, but it is important to be aware of the kinds of sites they are frequenting and the people they are associating with. You get to know the friends they are hanging out with at school, and their online friends shouldn't be any different. One of the contract rules should be that you have full access to their Facebook friends and can take a look whenever you wish.

### **Keep the Computer in a Central Location**

It's much easier to keep tabs on any online activity when the computer is located in a high-traffic zone than if your child is using a computer in the privacy of their own room. Place the computer in a central location like your kitchen or family room so that everything is out in the open.

### **Monitor the Pictures Your Child Posts Online**

In an ideal world, your child would never post a photo of themselves online, but that might not be entirely realistic. If they want to share photos with their friends via email or a social networking site, be sure you know exactly which pictures are being posted. Make sure the content of the photo is completely innocuous and that no identifiable locales in the background are noticeable.

### **Be a Good Example of How to Use Social Media**

If you are tweeting and updating your Facebook page at a stop light and taking every opportunity to "just check something," you're setting a poor precedent for social media usage that your child will surely follow. Always remember to ask yourself if you're setting a good example and [demonstrating proper technology etiquette](#) as well.

### **Limit Cell Phone Use**

Just as you would limit use of a computer, TV or gaming system, you can do the same with a cell phone. Set rules for the device, only allowing cell phone usage at certain hours in the evening or after homework has been completed. If you have teens of driving age, the most important rule to enforce is that under no circumstances should cell phones ever be used while driving. Phones should be kept off so incoming text sounds aren't a distraction or should be kept in the glove compartment, out of reach.

### **Teach Kids about an Online Reputation**

Many kids don't seem to understand the permanence of the online world. Make sure to stress to your kids what a digital footprint is and the impact inappropriate messages or images could have if a future college administrator or employer were to stumble upon them. As stated in the AAP study, what goes online stays online.

### **Talk to Kids about Online Dangers**

You may feel like you're scaring your kids when talking to them about the dangers of being online, but it's better for them to be scared than to be unaware. Having an open line of communication is crucial the minute your kids start using the Internet more independently. Parry Aftab, noted online safety and privacy expert and Executive Director of [WiredSafety](#), says, "Who's a stranger online? Everyone is! You need to remind your children that these people are strangers and that the standard rules always apply."

### **Get to Know the Technology**

Kids have gained a mastery of technology so quickly and can easily pick up on the nuances that any new gadget has, far more easily that we can in some cases. It is every parent's responsibility to know exactly which key features are included in the gadgets our kids are using. Stephen Balkam, founding CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute, says, "This can be a humbling experience. You may find that you had no idea that the Sony Playstation Portable

that you bought your 11-year-old last Christmas had a web browser. Or that your 5-year-old son (with the help of his older brother) has managed to create an avatar on Club Penguin and regularly goes for in-world pizzas with his other penguin friends."

### **Social Networking Sites to Check Out**

There are many Social networking sites available for everyone to use, new sites are being created daily and it is vital to be aware of the more mainstream sites as they rise up through the world of Social Networking. Many of these sites also provide the ability to link many accounts into one, so your child could site up to one site but then provide their details for others such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. and then all of the content from these sites is also available within one social network. Below are some of the mainstream social networking sites to ask your kids about and to make sure they know what each site does and also who would have access to the content on these sites.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Snapchat
- Google Plus+
- Tumblr
- Reddit
- Flickr
- Vine
- Meetup
- ClassMates
- Yellow
- Musical.ly
- Houseparty