

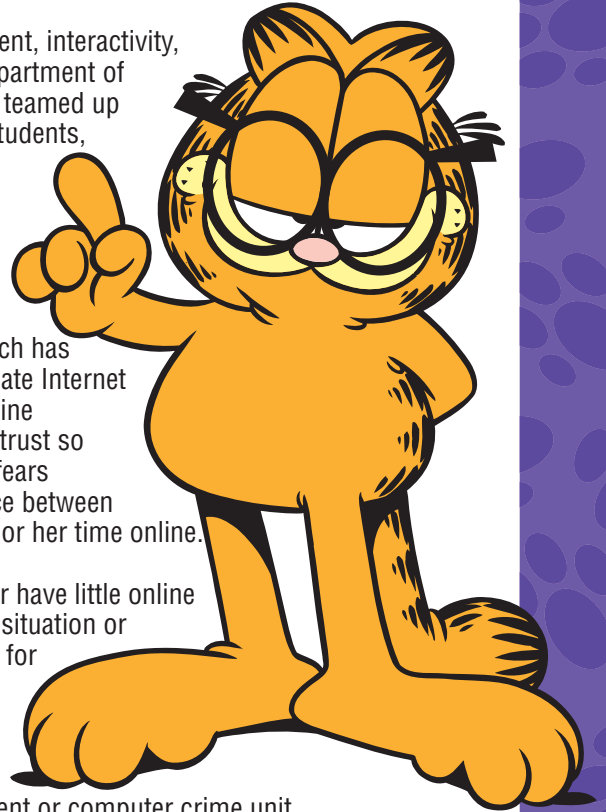
INTERNET SAFETY TIPS

What Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers Need to Know

The Internet is a powerful tool providing information, entertainment, interactivity, and communication to people all over the world. The Virginia Department of Education and the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia have teamed up with the Professor Garfield Foundation to provide guidance for students, teachers, and parents in order to help students protect themselves online.

Remember that technology and the Internet is your child's playground. Children often do not view the Internet as the complex and powerful network that it is. Sometimes children are reluctant to tell trusted adults about what happens online; research has shown that about 25 percent of children do not report inappropriate Internet experiences. They may be scared, ashamed, or fear that their online privileges will be taken away from them. Work to build a level of trust so that your children are comfortable discussing their problems or fears regarding their Internet use. By working together to find a balance between freedom and protection, you can help your child better enjoy his or her time online.

Some parents and guardians who are either new to technology or have little online experience become frustrated and distance themselves from the situation or ignore the Internet safety problem entirely. Don't be afraid to ask for help! There are many resources available to help parents and guardians understand how the Internet functions, how to diagnose a potential problem, and how to treat the situation. You can get advice from Internet safety experts in your local schools, or you can contact your local law enforcement department or computer crime unit.



There are many online resources that help parents learn about the potential dangers online and how they can better protect their child.

NetSmartz for Parents:

<http://www.netsmartz.org/netparents.htm>

WiredSafety: Information for Parents:

<http://www.wiredsafety.org/parent.html>

CommonSense Media Advice for Parents:

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents>

Connect Safely:

<http://www.connectsafely.org/>

Online Predators: What You Can Do to Minimize the Risk (Microsoft)

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/children/kidpred.mspx>

Cybertipline (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)









https://secure.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/CybertipServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US



www.infinitelearninglab.org

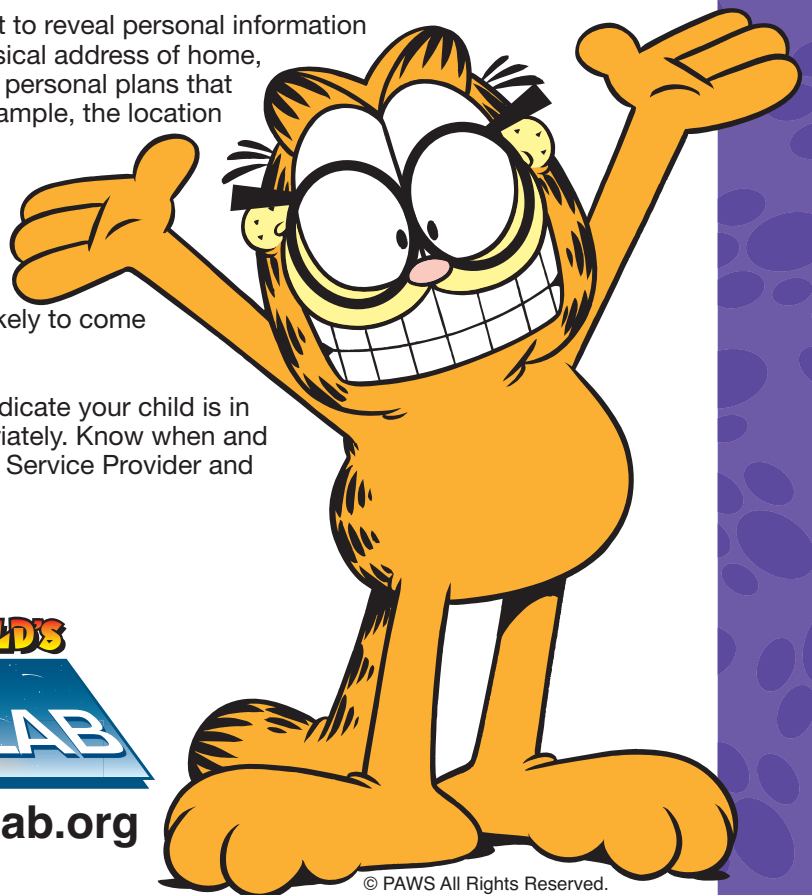
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THE FOLLOWING TIPS ARE A STARTING POINT FOR HELPING TO ENSURE YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY ONLINE:

-  Stay informed about Internet safety risks by signing up for an Internet safety newsletter (for example, <http://newsletter.netsmartz.org/> or <http://www.netfamilynews.org/>) and work directly with your school division.
-  If possible, keep the computer in a common area of the house, not a bedroom. However, be aware that devices such as cell phones and portable game or music devices also may allow Internet access.
-  Ask your child to show you some of his or her favorite sites and explain how he or she uses them. Talk with your child about what types of websites and activities are safe and appropriate.
-  Discuss with your child how to recognize the situations that are inappropriate or dangerous. Make sure your child knows that together, you can make sure that online time is safe and fun.
-  Create an agreement or contract that outlines what you and your child agree to in terms of his/her Internet use. By setting clear rules and discussing them together, you leave no room for "guesswork" on the part of your child once he/she is confronted with different online situations. Post these rules near the computer.
-  Make sure that your child knows not to reveal personal information online: name, addresses (email and physical address of home, school, etc.), phone number, photo, and personal plans that may be tracked back to the child (for example, the location and date of a soccer game).
-  Encourage your child to report anything in their Internet activity that makes him or her feel uncomfortable. Keep calm and do not blame your child; if you overreact, your child will be less likely to come to you with problems in the future.
-  Learn the warning signs that may indicate your child is in trouble or is using the Internet inappropriately. Know when and how to report a problem to your Internet Service Provider and local law enforcement.



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