

No one has to tell you how fun the Internet is or how important it is to connect with friends online. However, just like in the “real world”, there are risks online. Being a responsible digital citizen means keeping yourself and others safe online, thinking about your actions in a virtual world, and using technology to locate, organize, evaluate, and analyze information.

## Making Good Choices Online

- Remember to evaluate information, anyone can post anything online.
- Stop & Think. Are my actions online kind and respectful to others?
- Stop & Think. How do my actions online reflect who I am as a person?
- Stop and Think. Would it be okay if I did this in real life?
- Stop and Think. How would I feel if someone did the same thing to me?
- Remember that online actions can be traced.
- Remember that just because it is easy to download music or games online, doesn't mean that it is always right.
- Always think before you push “send”. Never post or send anything because you are angry.

## Keep it Secure

- Use a safe password with capital and lowercase letters and numbers.
- Remember to never share your password with others.
- Never reply to email or pop-ups that ask for personal information.
- Do not send private or personal information to a friend online. This information is public and can easily be sent to others.
- Avoid opening strange email messages or attachments.
- Watch out for online scams. If it's too good to be true, it probably is!

## Keeping Your Life in Balance

- Setting goals for the amount of time you spend online will help you find balance between friends, family, and school.
- Turn off your cellphone at night to take a communication break.

## Think Before You Write

- Think about what kinds of material you posting, where this information is posted, and who could have access.
- Remember to never include your full name, address, phone number, or email on the Internet.
- Respect others and never forward a message or post they sent you without permission.
- Respect yourself and never post or send private information online.
- Tell your teacher immediately if someone has posted harmful personal information about you.

## Be a Wise Consumer

- Avoid sites and advertisers that try to sell you a product.
- Do not provide personal contact information if you have to register for a website.
- Use the Internet to research products and find helpful information about companies.

## Connect Safely

- Use a username that creates a “positive online image”
- Wherever you communicate online, always use protective security features. Make sure you know how to block unwanted messages and file a complaint.
- Do not accept friends if you do not know them in person.
- Set your profile to “private” and require pre-approval before comments are posted by others.

## Surfing Strategies

- Always evaluate website. Is this the best website to use for information? Is the information current and relevant?
- Remember to cite all sources. Copying information directly from the internet is considered plagiarism and is illegal.
- Give credit to any intellectual property used from an online source.
- Only use non-copyrighted images or clipart for work. Just because you can find it on the Internet, doesn't mean you can reproduce the image in a report.

## Relate Safely

- If you are being cyberbullied, do not retaliate. Save the evidence and tell your teacher or parent.
- Do not be a cyberbully. People do not deserve to be treated badly and hurtful comments online are not funny.
- Sometimes someone will post a comment to get others upset and start a “flame war”. Do not comment on these posts and tell an adult if the comment is very dangerous.
- If someone tries to get you to talk about sex or ask for a sexy picture online, make sure to tell an adult right away.
- Never send or ask for nude images. The second that image leaves the device, you have no control over who will see it.
- If someone sends you an image, do not harm others by sending it public. Instead, delete the image and tell an adult about the situation.

## Using Technology to Learn

- Remember to use a variety of technologies to demonstrate creative and innovative thinking.
- What types of online tools can you use to communicate and collaborate in a classroom and with your peers?
- How can you use technology to help you solve a problem?