



Dear Parents,

As you know, the Internet is a vast virtual world, full of games, blogs, chat rooms, and most of all, millions of people. Children and youth need to know that as wonderful as it is, the web can also be a dangerous place, and even friends can do things to hurt them. It's critical that they are given the skills they need to protect themselves against online exploitation, including exploitation by friends and peers.

A great starting point for talking to your children about online safety are KINSA's ten Surf SMART tips:

1. Always make sure that a parent, teacher or guardian knows when you're surfing the net.
2. Keep your personal information private – don't give out your name, phone number, school name, or address without a parent/guardian's permission.
3. Never agree to hang out in person with someone you've met online. Remember that people may not be who they say they are.
4. Stand up against bullying – don't gossip or humiliate anyone.
5. If you receive an email with rude content – do not reply, just tell an adult right away. Remember – it's not your fault that someone sent you this.
6. If at any time you feel threatened or uncomfortable, speak to a responsible adult.
7. Don't buy something online or download anything without permission.
8. Never send a photo or a picture of yourself or your family to anyone without permission.
9. If you do not recognize or trust an email, attachment or web page – do not open it.
10. Keep your passwords SECRET! Not even our BFFs need to know.



Discussion Guide

Here are several suggested questions to get the discussion going:

- a) Do you have any safety concerns about being online?
- It's important that children know they can talk to their parents about what they're doing online, and not get into trouble if they get into a situation where someone else is making them feel uncomfortable.

- b) Would you consider a person you have been chatting with online to be a friend or a stranger? Why?
- If they consider the person to be a friend, ask them the following: Would you talk to a stranger on the street? Would you talk to a stranger when you are online at home? Is there a difference? There is not a difference. They are still a STRANGER.

- c) Do you feel it is safe to share private information with friends online?
- Even if they are at home using the Internet, it is not safe to share personal information online. The people they meet online are STRANGERS and should NOT be given private information. If they share information with a friend online, it can easily be passed on to others. And it is easy to say things to friends online that you wouldn't say in person, and information can easily be shared with other people.

- d) Do you feel it is safe to share pictures of yourself or your friends with other friends online?
- Pictures and videos that are posted online can be changed and shared with other people. Sharing explicit pictures of anyone who is under the age of 16 is illegal, even if the pictures are shared between friends, and even if they are sharing pictures of themselves.

- e) What information do you feel comfortable giving to people online?

- f) Have you ever given out your password to a friend?

- g) Do you always log off when you use a computer at school or at a friend's place?

Other Suggested Resources:

www.kinsa.ca
www.kidsintheknow.ca
www.internet101.ca
www.bewebaware.ca