

Kids Internet Safety Guide What to do to keep your kiddos safe online.



assignments to FaceTlme with Grandma, the internet is a fact of life. Unfortunately, it's not all academia and family connections—the internet can be a risky

It's nearly impossible to keep kids off the internet these days. From homework

place, especially for children. But you don't have to go it alone. SafeWise has identified the top online threats to kids and tips for keeping kids safe.

There are a number of potential dangers in cyberspace, but these are the top three threats that all kids face. 1. Cyberbullying: Almost 34% of kids aged 12–17 have been cyberbullied at some

The Top Online Threats for Kids



point in their life, and 11.5% have bullied someone else online. Cyberbullying is any aggressive, threatening, or mean-spirited activity conducted via electronic communication (email, social media posts, text messages, etc.). Girls are more likely



to be the victims of cyberbullying and more boys admit to bullying others online.1 **2. Online predators:** Adults who use the internet to entice children for sexual or



other types of abusive exploitation are considered online predators. Child victims can be as young as one or as old as 17. When it comes to online enticement, girls make up the majority (78%) of child victims—while the majority (82%) of online predators are male. And 98% of online predators have never met their child targets in real life.²



3. Exposure to inappropriate content: Inappropriate content is one of the most common online threats that kids encounter. Everything from vulgar language and



hate speech to graphically violent or sexual images can have a harmful effect on an impressionable child. Over 55% of tweens (kids aged 10–12) have been exposed to



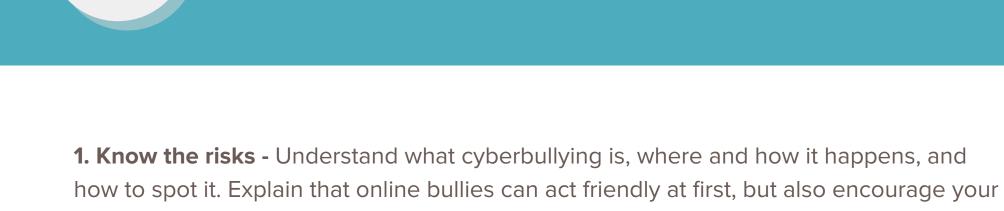
violent content on the internet, and nearly 60% have come across sexually explicit words or images.³ **NOTE:** For the purposes of this guide, we're focusing on the earliest prevention possible.

While these online safety tips and best practices can be applicable to anyone, we've selected steps to help protect kids from ages five through 12. Parents need to have transparent discussions

Dennis Chow CISO, SCIS Security How to **Protect your Kids**

around the vectors of cyber security, privacy,

and safety issues with their children.



1. Know the risks - Understand what cyberbullying is, where and how it happens, and

From Cyberbullying



2. Talk about it - Have ongoing discussions with your child. Talk about what cyberbullying is and what types of communication are acceptable and unacceptable. Make sure your child knows that it's safe for them to talk to you if something makes them uncomfortable.

child to be on the lookout for any interactions that make them feel bad, scared, or sad.



3. Keep a watchful eye - Place the computer in a common room and monitor all screen time. Use a shared email account, and if you let kids interact on social media, make sure you have full access to manage their accounts. Parental control software is another great way to stay in the know.

4. Set boundaries - Put time limits on screen time. Include all online activities—from

homework to playing games and surfing the web. Restrict social media access and



email accounts, and set rules for any IM, texting, etc. Let your kids know you'll be checking in regularly. **5. Build a network (IRL) -** They don't say it takes a village for nothing. The more



them safe. Know your kids' friends and their parents. Enlist support from school, sports, and church leaders. 6. Be prepared to respond - Don't wait until the heat of the moment to come up with your gameplan. In case your kid does get bullied online, learn what the

people you have looking out for your kid online, the more likely you are to keep



deal with what they're going through. What to Do if Your Child

proper responses are so you can keep your emotions in check and help your child

Has Been Bullied

Steps to Take if Your Child Is the Bully Pay attention. Look for signs of cyberbullying, like spending more **Look.** If your child sets up new email or social media accounts without your knowledge, makes snarky remarks while online, or

someone.

time online or texting, hiding the screen from others, emotional responses to online interactions, and sadness or seclusion.

what that response was. Acknowledge their feelings. Your child may feel frightened, angry, sad, or even betrayed if the bully is someone they trusted.

Block the bully. Immediately block (or "unfriend") the abuser. Use

Let them know it's okay to feel whatever they are feeling.

Ask questions. Gently ask your child what's going on and how

they feel about it. Find out if they've responded to the bully, and

Report it. Alert website and email administrators to the bully. Most social media platforms offer options to report a user or flag dangerous posts. If appropriate, report the abusive activity to

school or law enforcement officials.

tools like site blockers and privacy settings as extra layers of

protection.

Assess the damage. If your child's emotional response is extreme and protective measures don't seem to help, seek the help of a professional.

your child (other parents, teachers, school administrators, coaches, etc.) and bolster your child's positive friendships.

Enlist reinforcements. Talk to other adults who can help protect

It is a good idea to join their children's online social network so that the interactions can be monitored and actions can be taken if the children become targets or victims of cyberbullying. Parents can monitor the security settings on their children's social media accounts. On Facebook, parents can

Dr. Nir Kshetri

Listen. If you're concerned, gently broach the topic with your child, and then allow them the room to answer. Be open-minded and don't blame. Bullies are usually in some kind of pain as well.

starts to hide their online activity, they could be picking on

Monitor. Double your efforts to track your child's online activity. If you're not already using parental control software, now is the time to add this tool to your efforts.

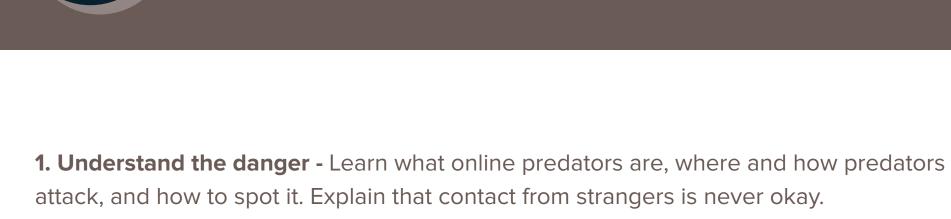
Support. Encourage your child to deal with their feelings and the

reasons they are engaging in this behavior. Suggest that they

crosses lines at school (or legally), inform the appropriate

authorities and ask for resources to address the situation.

apologize to the kids they've hurt, and help them do it. Get help. It can be hard to identify why your child starting acting out in this manner. Seek professional help, and if the bullying



How to **Protect your Kids**

From Online Predators

help their children choose various settings such as: 'Who can contact me?'

'Who can look me up?' 'Who can see my stuff?

at University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Professor & Cybersecurity Expert



4. Monitor online activity - Keep the computer in a common room, set limits on screen

time, use a shared email account, and put parental controls (like filters and apps) in place.

3. Rein in digital cameras - Control access to digital cameras and photo apps on every

device. Make sure your kids can't upload or download photos without your permission.

2. Guide online behaviors - Talk about what types of online interactions are okay and

what aren't. Discuss how to recognize signs of trouble and how to ask for help.



networks, and set up rules and time limits if you allow your kids to use them. Always follow age restrictions for websites and apps.

6. Don't let your guard down - Know that "safe" places still require vigilance. There are

kid-focused chat rooms and games where predators may pose as children.

5. Keep kids out of dangerous places - Talk about the risks of chat rooms and social

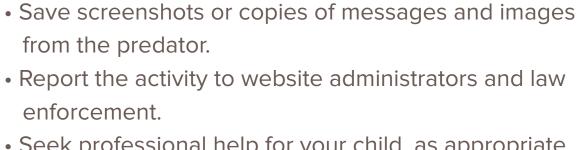


Steps to Take if Your Child **Safety Tips** for Kids **Has Been Targeted Online**

Never share personal information online.

• Don't post or share photos online.

someone you don't know.



• Let your child know that it's not their fault.

• Cut off communication with the predator.

usernames, and passwords.

enforcement.

· Change online credentials, including screen names,

• Let your parents or other trusted adult know if you need help. • Seek professional help for your child, as appropriate.

How to **Protect your Kids**

2. Let kids know what to watch for - Teach them that bad stuff can come from many

sources, including email and direct messages. Talk about pop-up ads and when and

3. Explain email safety - Make sure kids know not to click on things or open

know. Have them contact an adult before they download anything.

attachments in emails, and not to respond to messages from people they don't

4. Set up firewalls and content blockers - Use the built-in safety applications that

come on your devices and add more to be extra-safe. Block all websites that aren't

rated safe for children. Use a content filter or firewall that is designed to protect

This is nothing more than a sophisticated form of "stranger danger." Talk about

these subjects (sexting, sextortion, online sexual predators, cyberbullying) and

become comfortable talking to your kids about them. If you are not getting into your child's business, then you are doing them a disservice. **Scott Pietrzak** Owner, Online Safety Specialists

• Don't respond to emails, texts, or messages from strangers.

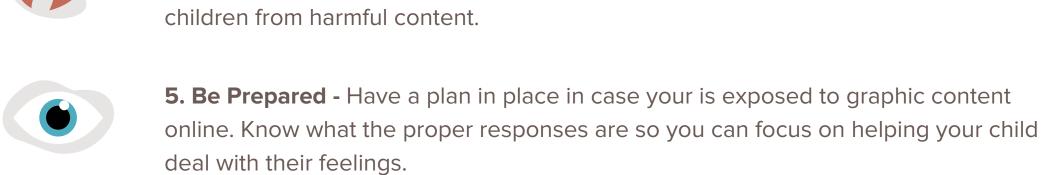
• Don't click links, open attachments, or accept gifts from

• Don't open links or attachments from strangers.

• Never agree to meet someone you met online.

From Inappropriate Online Content 1. Teach kids how to navigate the internet - Talk about proper online etiquette, how to enter safe search terms, how to identify a secure website (https), and when to ask an adult for help.

where it's okay to click on something.



Don't

• React emotionally.

• Shame your child.

Scare your child.

• Blame your child.

• Freak out.

Steps to Take if Your Child **Has Been Exposed to Inappropriate Content**

Do

• Find the source of the content.

• Restore a sense of safety.

• Keep the conversation going.

• Block access to dangerous or confusing sites.

- Grade A

- Grade B

- Grade C

- Grade D

• Help your child sort out their feelings.

• Stay calm.

• Be patient.



understanding those threats. As parents, we're fighting on unfamiliar turf. Forget the difficulties in embracing new tech, try finding the time to use and explore a new service after a busy day/week/month of work and parenting. **Allan Buxton** Director of Forensics, SecureForensics

It's not going to be easy. Protecting a child from such threats means

How Much Is Your State Doing to

Keep Kids Safe Online?



To grade each state, SafeWise looked at laws for both sexting and cyberbullying.

Points were assigned to states based on the types of laws currently on the books and

the consequences for violating those laws. If a state has a law proposed, partial points

were granted. School policies and consequences were also factors. Letter grades

В YES YES YES YES C YES YES YES NO В YES YES YES NO

> YES NO YES YES NO NO YES NO NO

Sources: 1. Cyberbullying Research Center, "2016 Cyberbullying Data" 2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "The Online Enticement of Children: An In-Depth Analysis of CyberTipline Reports"

Α YES YES YES В YES YES YES С YES YES YES C YES YES YES С YES YES D NO YES D YES NO

C

C

C

C

D

В

C

D

В

C

C

В

C

Α

C

C

Α

C

3. Bark, "2018 Children and Teen Cyber Fact Sheet"

YES

NO

YES

YES

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

YES

YES

YES

YES

YES

YES

YES

NO

YES

YES

YES

NO

YES

NO

NO

YES

NO

NO

NO

proposed

NO

YES

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

YES

NO

NO

YES

YES

NO

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

YES

YES

NO

YES

YES

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

YES

proposed

YES

NO

YES

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New

Hampshire

New Jersey

New Mexico

New York

North

Carolina

North Dakota

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

South

Carolina

South Dakota

Tennessee

Utah

Vermont

Virginia

Washington

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Wyoming

4. Cyberbullying Research Center, "State Sexting Laws"; Cyberbullying Research Center, "State Cyberbullying Laws"