

## HOW TO HELP WITH INTERNET SAFETY

### BE AWARE...

Talk with your child about what they are doing on-line

Help your child develop judgment on how to better protect their safety online

- Have a conversation with your child about the risks
- Set standards that will help guide their behavior and ENFORCE them, such as the rule, no making new friends on-line

### PROTECT YOUR CHILD BY...

Being on the lookout for:

- (a) unfamiliar friends who contact your child on-line
- (b) out of the blue behavior from your child that makes them possible targets for predators

Making their on-line profiles predator proof

- 1<sup>st</sup> step: ask to see their profile the following day, giving them an opportunity to clean it up!
- Have your child walk you through it
- Make sure your child's on-line profile(s) is/are stripped of identifying details (e.g. last name, identifying screen name, hometown, school name)
- Scan the photos for identifying information. If possible, encourage your child to avoid putting pictures, as they reveal details about a child's physical maturity and appearance. At the very least, make sure the photo your child has chosen is not overly suggestive or sexual.
- Have your child remove comments that suggest he/she is emotionally vulnerable such as, "I'm lonely" "I'll do anything for a laugh!"
- Take advantage of protection features
  - (a) set the page to private (will keep strangers from viewing your child's profile)
  - (b) consider the option that requires your teen to approve all comments before they are posted
- Read friends' profiles to make sure they are not putting your child at risk

## RESOURCES...

### TO HELP PARENTS LEARN MORE ABOUT NETWORKING SITES

- BlogSafety.com, a website that has forums for parents and others to discuss blogging and other aspects of social networking.
- GetNetWise.org, a website set up by a consortium of Internet firms and public-interest groups, provides links to monitoring and filtering software as well as safety advice.
- NetSmartz.org, a service of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, offers videos and online learning activities to teach children ages 5 to 17 how to be safe on-line.
- WiredSafety.org posts information on a range of Internet safety and privacy topics.

\*Information taken from *Decoding Myspace* by Michelle Andrews in U.S. News & World Report, September 18, 2006

## Rules of "Netiquette" for Girls

- Pick words carefully. The person reading your entry can't see your facial expression or body language.
- Don't write in all caps—it looks like you are angry or upset.
- Be careful whom you include or exclude in chat rooms.
- Don't talk about friends when you are online.
- Don't call girls names, even if you are joking. It can be taken out of context.
- Ask yourself: "Would I say this to her face?"
- Ask yourself: "Would I be upset if my parents read what I wrote?"
- Proofread and re-read.

Information adapted from [The Girls' Friendship Journal](#), by Cheryl Dellasega