

## Tips for talking to your child about online safety

\* **Prepare for your discussion by reading up on the subject and gathering information.** Make a list of all of the topics you are going to include in the discussion. Prepare any stories you are going to share with your child. It will be easier for your child to relate if they have something to connect the information to. You can find generic stories in books or on the Internet, but your own stories will be more interesting to your child.

\* **Choose a time and place.** Make sure you choose a private place where you will not have any interruptions.

\* **Set up the conversation with your child.**

- Tell your child you want to have a discussion about online safety, but make sure you assure them they have done nothing wrong.
- Make sure the discussion is open and friendly.
- Talk about how when they get older there are more responsibilities for them, the same goes with their Internet use.
- Ask your child some questions like:
  - "What do you know about the Internet?"
  - "What kind of people do you meet there?"
  - "Why do we need to talk about Internet safety?"
  - "Have you ever gotten to a site you should not have seen?"
  - "Has anyone ever contacted you online?"

\* **Share scenarios and stories with your child and then ask them questions about how they would handle the situation, knowing ahead of time how you want them to handle the situation.** Include the safety rules you would like them to follow.

\* **Review with your child**

- Internet is a wonderful place, but there are rules that must be followed. You are getting older and we want you to show me how responsible and trustworthy you can be.
- Always talk to an adult if something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable. Don't be afraid to report it to me.
- Never give out your personal information to anyone online.
- Never give out any family information

\* **Create an online contract with your child.** This can help you reinforce the rules you set and can be posted near your computer.

\* **After your conversation:**

- Look at your online safety controls.
- Watch for warning signs concerning your child's online activity
  - Time of day on the Internet
  - Excessive online activity
  - Working alone online
  - Spending all of the time in chat rooms
  - Evasive regarding online usage
  - Minimizing screen when you walk in the room or turning off the monitor

\* **Monitor and check in on your child periodically.**

## How can you keep your child safe online?

- Learn about the Internet
- Encourage your child to share their Internet experiences with you
- Teach your kids to trust their instincts; if they feel nervous about something have them let you know
- Help your child choose an online name that doesn't reveal any information about them
- Insist that your kids never give out your address, phone number, or other personal information, including where they go to school or where they like to play. This also includes a calendar of upcoming events or information about your future whereabouts
- Teach your child that "right from wrong" on the Internet is the same as teaching them "right from wrong" in real life
- Make sure your child knows that the rules for good behavior don't change just because they are online
- Teach your child to respect the property of others online, this includes sharing software and downloading materials illegally
- Teach your child never to meet online friends in person
- Teach your children that not everything they read or see online is true
- Control your child's online activity with Advanced Internet software
- Create a list of Internet house rules
- Teach your child not to talk to strangers on the Internet
- Teach your child not to run files or programs from email
- Place your computer in a central location
- Know all of your child's passwords and usernames

For additional resources and information, go to the <http://www.springlakeparkschools.org>, then go to **Parents** and click on **Parent Resources**.