



(ISC)² Top 10 Safe and Secure Online Tips for Parents

1. **Talk First:** Kids are fascinated by what they learn about the world through the Internet, so take the lead and talk with your child to make sure they understand the risks without trying to scare them. They want practical advice aimed at fixing problems. They want guidance, but they are the ones that are going to lead the way in our digital world.
2. **Social Networking Often Begins Earlier than Age 13:** Despite guidance and attempts to restrict membership to kids 13 and older, age restrictions are not respected or effectively enforced, as growing numbers of primary school children report that they have Facebook pages.
3. **Reward Sensible Behavior:** Encourage your child to ask for guidance and discuss problems they may encounter online. This way, you foster safe practices and build healthy communications on this important topic.
4. **Computers Don't Belong in Bedrooms:** Most kids over 11 say they have computers and laptops in their bedrooms. In one school, 85 percent of over 750 kids said they had personal computers in their bedrooms, with 75 percent of them admitting to being online after 11 p.m. on a school night. Whenever possible, children should not have unsupervised Internet access. Keep computers in family areas.
5. **Don't Rely Solely on 'Parental Controls':** These only work for younger children. As soon as they are old enough for sleepovers, they are beyond your protection, so you will need to educate them to be safe.
6. **Understand that Any Internet-Connected Device Can Have Risks:** Cell phones, Wi-Fi-enabled handheld gaming devices and eReaders can be used maliciously as well, so treat them as you would a computer and discuss the risks with your children. For instance, many online video games have become a lure for cyber predators, especially those targeting young boys.
7. **'Friend' Collecting Is Competitive:** Kids proudly talk about the number of friends they have on their social networks. They don't even know them all -- the objective is just to look popular. Boys can be particularly blasé about friends they don't know, believing that girls are the real target for stalkers and sexual predators. School surveys show that 50-60 percent of kids admit to having friends or contacts they have never met.

8. ***Friends Are the Common Risk:*** Children are more daring online, insulting others, posting revealing pictures, and getting personal with people they don't know, fueling cyberbullying and sexting. Reports include sophisticated attacks on teachers' reputations, with fake social networking profiles and campaigns on legitimate sites to lure people to them. It's the kids that are making themselves vulnerable to this online abuse, posting the ammunition — personal information and photos, and sharing passwords.
9. ***Reputations Matter:*** Most kids don't need to be told this. What they don't realize is how their online behavior effects their real-world prospects. Universities and hiring managers consult social networking sites when evaluating them as candidates. Not only does their own behavior matter, but they must also protect their online identity.
10. ***A Child's Online Behavior Can Negatively Impact Parents:*** Even if your child remains personally safe online, their use of the computer can place their parents in peril. About half of children admit to using peer-to-peer networks to download music illegally, while pirated games are also downloaded. Parents can be threatened with prosecution and having their broadband blocked. Also, those sites most popular with kids for networking and downloads are the most popular for cyber attacks, launching malware attacks aimed at stealing identities, bank details, even corporate information on an unprotected home computer.

The tips above were gathered from (ISC)² member volunteers who participate in the organization's Safe and Secure Online program, a worldwide initiative that brings top cyber security experts into schools to teach children ages 11-14 how to protect themselves in a cyber-connected world. The program tackles the most relevant issues such as cyber bullying, social networking, online predators, identity theft, online reputation and more. Using compelling materials developed by former school teachers, the program is offered to any school or youth association at no cost.

If you are a parent, educator or organization that would like the Safe and Secure Online presentation delivered at your local school, or would like more information about the program, please visit <https://cyberexchange.isc2.org/safe-secure.aspx> or contact us at safeandsecure@isc2.org. You can also follow the conversation about children's online safety on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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