10 WAYS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE ONLINE: TIPS FOR ADULTS

1 LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Your students are learning, playing, and connecting with others online. It's easy to end up in front of a screen all day! But setting limits on screen time can help ensure that your students are spending their time meaningfully, both on and offline. Set time limits for schoolwork, games, and connecting with others online so that children don't wander towards other online activities.

2 PROTECT YOUR P.I.I.

Personally identifiable information, or P.I.I., is information that a stranger could use to find out more about you. P.I.I. includes information like your full name, birth date, address, and school name. Be sure that students' usernames, passwords, and bios do not include P.I.I. Parents and teachers can help by double checking students' profiles on games or social media sites, and talking to kids about P.I.I.

3 CONTROL DOWNLOADS AND INSTALLATIONS

Make sure that any new app download or upgrade is done by an adult and not your students. This allows parents to vet and approve new apps or games before students get into a potentially dangerous online environment. Make sure to read about the app or installation before approving it!

4 GET TALKING!

Kids can have rich and complex lives online, just like they have offline. They chat with friends, play games together, and now are learning digitally, too. You won't know what your kids are doing online until you ask. Daily conversations can help you learn more about what your students do online and why it's important to them. This will help you identify if there are any adjustments that need to be made for online safety.

5 REINFORCE SOCIAL AWARENESS

Just like in real life (IRL, as the kids say), there are safe and unsafe social interactions online. Have regular conversations with your students to build social awareness so they know when situations feel safe or unsafe and what to do if they need help. Many of the same concepts apply: if strangers are asking you for personal information or want to connect privately through a direct message or email, take a step back and alert an adult! Just like we remind kids not to get in cars with strangers, we need to remind them not to get in private digital spaces with strangers, too.

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6 MODEL SAFE BEHAVIOR

Kids watch and learn from the adults around them. Teachers and parents can model safe and responsible online behavior for students. Narrating your behavior can help students learn, so the next time you take a Zoom call use it as a teachable moment: "I am going to make sure my background doesn't have any photos or personal information, because there may be people on this call that I don't know and I want to make sure to be safe while we talk."

7 SET A NO-PHOTO RULE

Sharing photos can be fun, but could also put students in unsafe situations online. For younger students, set a no-photo rule and make it clear that any photo sharing needs to be done with an adult. For older students, you can set parameters around what kind of photos they can share, or create a folder with photos that are parent-approved and safe to share. Make sure photos don't reveal any P.I.I. and are age-appropriate.

8 CREATE A SAFETY PLAN

If students feel unsafe online, they need to be able to tell an adult immediately. You don't want students to feel secretive about their digital lives so that they come to you when they need help. Create a safety plan so that your students know exactly what to do if someone asks for their P.I.I. or makes them feel unsafe in any way. See our Online Safety Checklist for Students to help students identify when to come to you for help.

9 CREATE A LIST OF APPROVED ONLINE SPACES

Keep a list of websites, apps, and games that are parent-approved and safe to use. This way you not only know what students are doing online and approving the platforms they use, but you can have a reference list to proactively ask them about their time in each online space. If there are any security breaches or problems with a platform or website, you know immediately whether or not your student is using it and can intervene.

10 GET ONLINE TOGETHER

Who said video games are for kids? We're all learning, working, playing, and socializing online more than ever these days. Playing games together online can both help families bond and help parents monitor online activity. Ask your students to teach you how to play their favorite game, or explore new games together! Explore TikTok and create dances together or dive into a new topic on YouTube - don't be afraid to get online with your students and have some fun together!

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ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

There are a lot of fun, creative, and exciting things to do online! But it's important to remember to stay safe in order to continue having fun. Before you post anything, or as you play games with others, use this checklist to keep yourself safe:

- ✅ I am not sharing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) like: my name, my address, my birth date, or my school name.
- ✅ I am not posting pictures without my parent's approval.
- ✅ My parents know the website I am visiting or the game I am playing.
- ✅ I am not talking to anyone I don't know without my parent's approval.

How do you know when something online may be unsafe? Here's when to talk to an adult:

- ⚠ If someone asks for your personally identifiable information (P.I.I.).
- ⚠ If someone you don't know asks to connect over email, in a private message, or over video chat.
- ⚠ If someone you don't know asks you to send them pictures.
- ⚠ If you notice or experience bullying online.
- ⚠ If anything you see makes you feel uncomfortable. Trust yourself! If it looks scary or strange and makes you feel uncomfortable, stop and tell an adult.

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