**Best practice for keeping safe on the internet**

**Children should;**

* Ask permission before using the internet.
* Tell an adult if they see or read something which is rude or upsetting.
* Use cameras, computers etc correctly and ask permission before using photographs of other people.
* Not give their details or talk to anyone on line with asking an adult.

**Adults should;**

* Ensure children understand and follow the above.
* Stay up to date on internet safety matters.
* Use filters.
* Read and sign the school Acceptable Use Policy/Agreement (AUP) if helping in school.
* Be aware of safety issues related to the use of mobile phones, tablets, cameras and hand held devices.
* Monitor children’s use of the internet
* Preferably be in the same room as the child when they are on the internet.

**Six ideas to help keep children safe online**

Some of these are more applicable if you have older children.

**1. Communicate with your child.**

Stay involved in your child’s online activities by talking with them and showing interest in their online world. Ask them to show you their favourite websites or the latest app or online game. Who are they talking to? What are they doing online? Where are they going online?

**2. Digital footprints, comments and photos are forever.**

“If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all” is a golden rule online. Teach your child that online activities – stay online forever. They may not be thinking about university applications or future employers, but protecting their digital identity is crucial today.

**3. Set time limits for Internet and cell phone use.**

Set guidelines with respect to the internet, gaming and mobile phone use and learn the warning signs of too much online time: skipping activities, meals and homework; weight loss or gain; falling behind at school. If you have younger children, set boundaries now. If you have older children, incorporate new rules with new devices.

**4. Stay involved and stay current of solutions.**

We may be in the online world, but you are still a parent and as a parent, preparation and common sense are vital tools. Share with other parents or ask your child’s teacher . If you are a bit more technologically inclined, roll up your sleeves and get online and research the available resources (including the freebies). And for the legally inclined, dig into those terms of use on your child’s sites.

**5. Be a model for your child.**

 No texting and checking your own social media accounts during dinner or family time. Get back to the basics and spend uninterrupted, unconnected quality time with your child.

**6. If you face an online issue: don’t panic. Parent.**

If you are faced with an online issue, don’t immediately remove your child’s electronic devices if s/he comes to you with a problem. Don’t criminalize your child for inappropriate behaviour. Use the issue as a teaching point and a communication opportunity.

Last word of advice: continue parenting your child in the online world as you do in the offline world – by using your own good common sense and experience. Be supportive, set boundaries, and offer opportunities to explore and develop.

Even if you understood everything about Facebook security and settings yesterday; today you need to learn about snapchat and tomorrow who knows what it will be. The type of media or website is irrelevant, you must teach your children to make the right choices.