



Conewago Valley School District Counselors' Corner

February 2019

Keeping Students Safe -- In the World Online

Most of us would agree that it would be highly unlikely that we would leave our front doors wide open, let a stranger into our homes to look at our personal photos, and speak to someone we just met with the familiarity we reserve for family and close friends.

Most of us would also agree that the internet offers valuable information and knowledge "at our fingertips." These benefits, however come with the dangerous risks of cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online predators.

How can we keep our students safe in this vast new world?

Safety Tips

Establish Guidelines for Internet Use (kidshealth.org, 2019):

- Spend time online together to teach your kids appropriate online behavior.
- Keep the computer in a common area where you can watch and monitor its use, not in individual bedrooms. Monitor any time spent on smartphones or tablets.
- Bookmark kids' favorite sites for easy access.
- Check your credit card and phone bills for unfamiliar account charges.
- Find out what, if any, online protection is offered by your child's school, after-school center, friends' homes, or any place where kids could use a computer without your supervision.

Watch for Warning Signs (kidshealth.org, 2019):

- Spending long hours online, especially at night
- Phone calls from people you don't know
- Unsolicited gifts arriving in the mail
- Your child suddenly turning off the computer when you walk into the room
- Withdrawal from family life and reluctance to discuss online activities
- Talk to your kids! Keep an open line of communication and make sure that they feel comfortable turning to you when they have problems online.

What To Do If You Suspect Unsafe Activity:

- Take your child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.
- Teach students to inform a parent or trusted adult about any suspected online bullying
- Teach students not to respond to or forward inappropriate messages (that contain bullying or sexual content)
- Print out evidence if you can
- Do NOT delete the evidence

- Block numbers from phone, profile and email
- Report the bully's/offender's phone number, screen name, or email address to the phone company or website
- **Call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at (800) 843-5678 if you're aware of the sending, use, or viewing of child pornography online. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the FBI if your child has received child pornography via the Internet.**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE&feature=player_embedded

This video is appropriate to show young people and can be used as a conversation starter for online dangers.

It is important to teach young people to THINK BEFORE THEY CLICK!

Additional Resources:

For more information on mental illness:

<https://kidshealth.org>

<https://www.netismartz.org>

<https://www.commonensemedia.org/>

Contact Information:

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