

MAFES Dawg Tracks

August, 2012



*Safety Tips: Internet
Safety for Kids*



A new statement in our everyday life now is “Hey, the times are changing!” This is a fact! They are changing so fast that it’s hard to keep up sometimes. We worry about “staying on top” of all the latest technologies and happenings in all parts of the country. I look back in my teenage years and my life was centered around yard mowing in the summer and sports in the fall and winter. A bad day in Chickasaw County was if you got a “hickey” on your head from a wet corn cob fight or a casual rock thrown as our take as a “hand grenade.” Now they worry about the Androids, G-4s or G-5s, M3 players and all the other electronic devices that are on the market now.

According to the **Center for Missing and Exploited Children**, many parents are talking with their kids about the evils of internet security and safety. Of course, there are those that have that attitude of my kids aren’t involved in that stuff, and then there is a segment that just leaves the kids to do as they choose.

We need to stay involved with their activities, especially where computers and internet activities are involved. Following are some rules for internet safety for kids that can serve as guidelines, if we distribute them throughout our client:

RULES FOR INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS-

- ✓ **Never give out personal information on the internet-**
Refrain from giving out your name, address, telephone number, the name and location of your school or your parents’ name. Websites or other online services may ask children for information in order to enter special contests or to obtain free gifts. Other websites won’t allow access unless the user gives them personal information. However, once personal information is given, it is important that your children understand that their privacy can be compromised. Their names could end up on a database - or worse, the information could be used to harm or exploit them.
- ✓ **Be cautious when developing a website-**
Children should know never to post a home address, telephone number, or personal photographs. If children wish to be contacted, they should post an e-mail address, and once it is posted, they may or probably will receive messages. Children should be very cautious when opening an e-mail from a non-familiar address. If they should receive messages that are threatening or sexually explicit, they should tell their parents immediately.
- ✓ **Never, under any circumstances, should a child agree to meet face-to-face with someone that they have been corresponding with online without their parents’ permission-**
If a meeting is arranged, make sure that it takes place in public and that the parents always accompany the child.
- ✓ **Avoid chat rooms that discuss sex or cults-**
While these subjects may seem interesting at first they could put a child in danger.

- ✓ **Always inform their parents when they come across anything online that makes them uncomfortable-**
Parents and children can alert their internet provider or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children hot line at 1-800-843-5678.
- ✓ **Be suspicious of anyone they meet in a chat room-**
These individuals may try to turn their family, friends, teachers or religion against them.
- ✓ **Choose a gender-neutral online name in a chat room to avoid harassment.**
- ✓ **Never respond to messages or bulletin boards that are sexually obscene, threatening or make them feel uncomfortable in any way.**
- ✓ **Never send any personal materials to an online friend, such as additional telephone numbers or photographs without informing parents.**
- ✓ **Always be cognizant that the people they meet online may not be who they say they are.**

TIPS TO PREVENT & STOP CYBER-BULLING-

Bullying is bullying, be it cyberspace or in person.

- **Familiarize kids with the meaning of cyber-bullying-**
~using cellphones, computers, or other electronic media to hurt, scare or embarrass other people. Cyber-bullying will get a person in serious trouble, whether it is in school or with the law. Cyber-bullying is illegal in some areas.
- **Be clear about the rules for using technology– this includes all forms whether it is computers, i-phones, or other types.** It is your right to use the technology, but you should use it intelligently and respectfully.
- **Stay aware and involved with what your child is doing-**
~Spend time with your kids so that you know what they are doing.
~If you don’t understand the technology, get someone to show you so you can better understand you children.
- **Be careful about the use of personal information-** Do not allow your kids to issue personal information unless it is in a school or other controlled situation.
- **Give consequences if a child cyber-bullies-** Suspension from use of their electronics is the best solution for cyber-bullying. Take this privilege away and you put them at a disadvantage of their computing ability.
- **Provide support if a child is cyber-bullied-** If you think the child is being cyber-bullied, let them know that you are sorry that is happening and you will get help to stop it.
- **Practice on speaking up to stop cyber-bullying-** Work with the child in using diplomacy to stop this practice, in that it is inappropriate and illegal. A hard-nosed approach will sometimes promote it rather than stop it.

*Use Courtesy & Common Sense-
With All Internet Functions*



Be Alert<><><><><>Be Alive!