Online Safety for Your Children

For young children:

Your best approach is to sit with them anytime they are online. Join in on their digital activities, ask questions and learn with them as they grow.

For tweens and teens:

The most effective strategy is guidance, keep communication open and positive. Have them show you the sites they visit, and tell you a little bit about that site and what it is used for.

Never give out any personal information.

Below are some helpful internet tips to start, or continue these conversations with your children:

Think before clicking

- When children get unexpected messages, even from friends, tell them not to open any attachments. This includes photos, songs, videos or any other attachments within that message. Instead, they should check with the sender by some means other than hitting "reply."

- Talk to your children about downloading any software, games, music or any other content.

Share with care

- Be sure children understand that they should never give out any personal information such as full name, age, photos, home and email address, phone number, or school name online.

- Children should only post what they are comfortable with others seeing.

Be smart about mobile phones

- Help children lock their phones with PINs – and remind them not to share their PIN with anyone

- Teach children to use GPS cautiously because it can be used to pinpoint where they are or tag the location of their photos.

Before downloading apps

- Help children choose apps that are age-appropriate.

- Review the privacy policy and find out what the app will do with sensitive data and location information.

Playing online games

Talk to your children about the kind of games they want to play, and then review the ratings. Stick to the well-known games and those from reputable sites. Together create guidelines for safe online gaming:

- Should children play with just friends, friends and family, or with anyone?

- How many hours a day or week are appropriate?

- Will you allow them to use a webcam, text or voice features, and if so with whom?

Talk to your children about what to do if there are problems.

Encourage children to trust their instincts. Ask them to:

- Tell you if something or someone online makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. Be clear that you will not punish them or take away online privileges because of someone else's actions.

- Report objectionable behavior or content to the service or app administrator.

- Never meet an online "friend" in person without safeguards in place. Be sure they understand that they should talk with you to create a safe plan for meeting someone. Children should bring along a trusted adult and meet in a public place like a coffee shop, or library.

If your child is in immediate danger – someone threatens, harasses, or tries to lure your child into meeting in person, call the local police.

For more information or to file a complaint, visit our website or contact:

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