

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

BECOME MORE COMPUTER LITERATE

- Spend time online with your children to explain appropriate behaviour and rules for the internet.
- Know how to use the Internet yourself.
- Consider using online services with special child/youth accounts that have restricted access to chat rooms on the internet.
- Choose an Internet provider that can give you information and access to other parental control features, such as blocking or filtering software.
- Frequently check your Internet program's 'History' folder to see what sites your child is using, to make sure he or she not receiving, accessing or sending inappropriate material. You could also check the 'Favourites' folder on Internet Explorer or 'Bookmarks' on Netscape.
- Share or have access to your child's e-mail so that you can monitor his or her mail.
- Make sure that you are present when your children are in private chat rooms. Monitor their communications. **Make sure that the computer is in a common family room.** If the computer is in a child's bedroom, it is difficult for you to monitor.

CAUTION YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT GIVING OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE:

- Encourage your children to use "pen names" (that don't identify them) when on the Internet, instead of using their real names.
- Do not fill out "online profiles" that can provide information about where to contact your children (these "profiles" are becoming very common).
- Ensure that your children do not give out personal information, such as your address, place of work, home, work or cell phone number, or the name of the school they attend.
- Make sure that they never give out credit card or personal identification numbers, SINs, bank or credit card information to anyone - online or not.
- Supervise all online purchases - obtain a low limit credit card to use only for online purchases.

SET GUIDELINES FOR FACE TO FACE MEETINGS REQUESTED BY ONLINE "FRIENDS"

- Never allow your children to arrange face-to-face meetings with any other computer users without getting your permission. If you do agree to permit a meeting, go with your child and stay with your child throughout the meeting. Insist that your child leave the meeting with you. Only go to public places. Do not go private, out of the way places.

DEALING WITH OBSCENE OR THREATENING MATERIAL

- Ensure that your child knows to delete any email that has an attachment from someone they do not know personally. These attachments often contain viruses and obscene material. If your child receives obscene or threatening material, contact your Internet Service provider. If it continues, contact the police.
- Be aware of 'cyberbullying' - some youth are using "msn" chatlines and email to spread rumours and gossip and to threaten other youth. Have your child print a copy of the threats and contact the police.

PROMOTE OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- One of the tactics used by pedophiles and other people who misuse the Internet to exploit children and youth is to befriend lonely or troubled children and youth online and try to gain their trust.
- Talk openly with your children about what material is inappropriate or obscene. Ask your child to tell you at once if they receive or see any inappropriate or obscene material.

MONITOR THE TIME YOUR CHILDREN SPEND ON THE INTERNET

- If your child changes the screen or turns off the monitor when you enter the room, they may be viewing inappropriate content online.