

SAFE TEXTING AND ONLINE SOCIALIZATION FOR TEENS



To help keep your teen safe online, teach them to...

LIMIT ACCESS TO PROFILES

- Set all accounts to maximum privacy settings. This will give you the most control possible over who sees your information.



- Even with privacy settings, your posts and profile may still be seen by others, including employers, college admissions officers, and the police. Consider what you post.

KNOW WHAT NOT TO SHARE

- Set screen names that don't reveal real name, age, gender, or address.
- Social Security number, street address, phone number, financial information (bank account or credit card numbers) should never be shared.



EVALUATE CREDIBILITY

- Not everything you read online is true. Check before you share or act on something you read.
- People online may not be who they appear to be or say they are.



KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEXTING



- Sending explicit photos or videos of a minor, including yourself, is considered distribution of child pornography. You may be prosecuted or labeled a sex offender.
- Once a photo or video is posted or sent, you can't take it back, even if you delete it. It can then be distributed.

AVOID TEXT PITFALLS

- Ignore texts from people you don't know.
- Delete messages that ask for personal information, even if a "free gift" is offered.
- Be wary of group chats. They are more likely to involve someone you don't know well, get your private information distributed, and enable cyberbullying.



IF SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, TRUST YOUR GUT

- If something feels suspicious or creepy, even if you're not sure why, tell your parents.
- If someone is sending you sexual messages or nude photos, asking you to send nude photos, or trying to get you to do sexual things, go to www.cybertipline.com to make a report.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0002-parents>

<https://staysafe.org/teens/>

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