

## Online Safety Guidelines for Parents – [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

1. Personal information stays personal. While this is an important rule for children it's also an important rule for parents. Giving information on your family and your children to the wrong person could be dangerous.
2. Make sure your child doesn't spend all of his or her time on the computer.
3. People, not computers, should be their best friends and companions.
4. Keep the computer in a family room, kitchen or living room, not in your child's bedroom. This way parents can monitor what is happening when the child is online. Knowing you are watching, kids are less likely to put themselves in risky situations and you can safely oversee what's going on.
5. Learn enough about computers so you can enjoy them together with your kids.
6. Watch your children when they're online and see where they go.
7. Make sure that your children feel comfortable coming to you with questions. This should apply to all situations including the computer. If your children feel they can trust you they are more likely to come to you with tough problems and questions.
8. Keep kids out of chat rooms unless they are monitored.
9. Encourage discussions between you and your child about what they enjoy online. This way you can direct your children to safe sites that fit in with their interests and it helps our children like we want an active role in their lives.
10. Discuss these rules, get your children to agree to adhere to them, and post them near the computer as a reminder.
11. Help them find a balance between computing and other activities.
12. Remember to monitor their compliance with these rules, especially when it comes to the amount of time your children spend on the computer.
13. Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know all of their other friends.
14. Warn them that people may not be what they seem to be. I can say I'm a 12 year old boy named Billy but I'm not. The Internet provides a cover for people to put on whatever persona's they desire. Predators often pose as children to gain our children's trust.

### **Passwords**

Don't give out your passwords or store them where they can be found: remember that those who control the passwords control the world. Find a password you can remember easily, but one that's not so obvious that your children can figure it out. Also, change your password frequently. When you type it in, don't let them look over your shoulder. Never store it on

your hard drive, or preprogram it into your sign on screen. This may cost you a few more seconds when you get online, but may save you plenty of heartaches.

### **Protecting your children when they're not home**

Make sure you and the parents of your children's friends agree about monitoring the children's activities online, and that you use similar tools to enforce your choices. If not, circumventing your parental controls is as simple as your children walking next door and computing at a friend's house. If you can't agree on a joint policy, make sure the other parents honour your wishes and keep your children off their computer while visiting.

### **Credit Cards**

Don't store your credit card information on your computer. As inconvenient as it might be to have to access it from somewhere else, it creates too much of a temptation for computer-savvy kids and their friends. By the way, don't be afraid of using your credit cards online, as long as you follow certain safety rules:

1. Only supply your credit card information on secure lines. (Your web browser will warn you if it's not a secure transmission.)
2. Make sure, even if the line is secure, that you're dealing with a reputable company, and that they are who they say they are.

Taken from Wired Safety.Net