

Keeping Girls Cybersafe

10 Tips for Parents

www.cybersafegirl.ca

- 1 Start Young**

Start talking to your children about social media and its risks at a young age, around six or seven years old.¹ It is better for girls to get good information and learn about the risks from you, and it opens up the conversation for later years.²
- 2 Start a Conversation**

Let girls know that they can talk to you about problems openly without any worry of being judged. Use everyday opportunities to talk to them about online activities. For example, start the conversation about online risks when those issues are presented in television shows, movies or commercials.³
- 3 Monitor Computer Use**

Keep the computer in a high-traffic area of the home. This is safer than a computer in the bedroom. You can also discuss the use of software to block access and information from some sites. This is a good way to monitor what she sees online.
- 4 Provide Information**

Talk to her about reaching out to an adult at the first sign of a threat. Don't assume that she will do this. Keep a contact list of trusted people next to the computer. This can be used if something online makes her feel uncomfortable. Include trusted organizations and police on the contact list. You can also provide her with a list of teen support centres and hotlines.
- 5 Discuss the Risks**

Discuss uploading photos and videos. Talk about the kinds of materials that could impact them in the future as materials are never fully removed from the internet once they are out there.⁴ Discuss the dangers of giving personal information to strangers and sharing passwords.
- 6 Agree on Appropriate Internet Usage**

Create an online agreement or contract for internet use, like the one on [cybersafegirl.ca](http://www.cybersafegirl.ca). Make sure it contains clear rules and includes her input. Agree on an online time limit and the types of online interaction allowed. If you are going to supervise online activity, let her know that you will be watching out for her. An open dialogue will help.
- 7 Maintain Rules**

Discuss her list of online friends and who she is allowed to chat with. She should not add anyone to her friend lists that you do not know, that she only knows casually or is just a friend of a friend.⁵
- 8 Become a Member**

Join a social network so that you can stay connected. If she is wary of allowing you to "friend" her, suggest creating an identity where it is not clear that you are the guardian. She will know you are there, but her friends will not. Learn about the website. Know the security and privacy settings.
- 9 Reach Out to Other Parents**

Discuss cybersafety with other parents in order learn from one another and be more informed of the risks of social media. Protecting girls from cyber-violence is a team effort.
- 10 Stay Calm**

The more anxious you are about online use, the more she will fear telling you what is going on. Promote open communication about online activities. Let her know that the conversation is safe. This allows open discussion and lets her know that you are there for her.

¹ Rasmussen, R.H. (2012, April 19). The best body on Facebook. In Kids and Media. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsandmedia.org/the-best-body-on-facebook/>

² The Royal Canadian Mount Police. (n.d.). Internet safety. In Parents on deal.org. Retrieved from <http://deal.org/parents/>

³ The Royal Canadian Mount Police. (n.d.). Internet safety. In Parents on deal.org. Retrieved from <http://deal.org/parents/>

⁴ Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (n.d.). Age-specific tips. In Cybertip.ca. Retrieved from http://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/age_spec_p4#anchor_menu

⁵ CBC Newfoundland and Labrador. (2010, October 27). Talking to strangers. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/nl/blogs/seen/strangers.html>

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