

Online Safety Tips

- **Keep your personal information secret when chatting online.** Don't disclose your name, address, telephone number, cell phone number, private email address, school name or location, or pictures of yourself online. Be careful when filling out "profiles" in clubs or communities. Think about what visible information you have, for example in your Profile or Member directory. These are public areas of the Internet and people can search on them and then contact you. Check your Internet Messenger profile and make sure it doesn't include any personal information
- **Use a nickname**, not your real name, and a nickname that is not going to attract the wrong type of attention. When entering a Chat room you are often asked to give out your AGE, SEX, & LOCATION (ASL). Stick to your nickname and don't be too specific about your location. Keep your personal information secret when talking to someone you don't know in the real world.
- **Keep your username and password private**, and change your password on a regular basis
- **When using Internet Messaging, don't accept messages from people you don't know.** Think carefully about who is on your list. People on Internet Messaging, like in Chat, may not be who they say they are, so a friend of a friend is not necessarily a friend.
- **Don't reply to abusive messages.** Don't send abusive messages either. It's best not to say anything on Internet Messaging that you wouldn't say to someone's face.
- **Never download from an unknown source.** Be very careful not to open attachments from people or organizations that you don't know and make sure you have an anti-virus software protection system on your computer, which is updated. This is not only to protect you from receiving viruses but also to stop your machine from passing viruses onto others by mistake. Be suspicious of all files you receive on your Internet Messenger. Check with the sender if you are unsure, and don't open anything sent by someone you don't know and trust. Don't click on a link you received but didn't ask for, ones you come across in another member's profile.
- **Archive/Save a copy of your conversations.** Archiving or saving your conversations can provide useful evidence if you come to make a report about something or someone. Some versions of Messenger have an option to archive conversations, which is easy to switch on, check your preferences or privacy options in the Messenger toolbar for example, under Tools. For others that do not offer this option, you can still highlight the conversation with your mouse and copy and paste conversations into a Word document, which you can save.
- **Don't give out a lot of personal information about yourself when you sign up for a new product or when you enter a competition** - You might also find that you are then bombarded with SPAM or Junk mail. Often companies will ask you to register with them online because they are interested in selling you something. Don't be fooled by some of the online quizzes or raffles! It's best not to give out too much personal information on forms or quizzes - especially those that ask for personal details of those of other members in your home. Just like individuals can lie on line, organizations and companies can also mislead you. Just because someone has put something up on a website doesn't mean it is true. Also many advertising banners pop-ups and links can be misleading. Being smart online means you need to ask questions and check whether information on websites is true.
- **Be careful who you trust online** - People online, no matter how long you have been talking to them or how friendly they are, may not be who they say they are. There are lots of stories about how people have made real friends through the Internet and this has obviously involved meeting up face to face after chatting on line. However, it is important to remember that people may not be who they say they are and both young people and adults can be fooled into meeting someone who they might not wish to meet.

- **Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous.** If you feel that you 'have to' meet, then for your own safety you must tell your parent or caregiver and take them with you, at least on the first visit, and meet in a public place in daytime. If someone is pestering you to meet up or hassling you it may be that they aren't the nice person they say they are and may be lying about their age, interests, and even their sex.
- **Block users if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.** For whatever reason you may wish not to receive messages from a particular person anymore. If this is so you can block this person. To do this you right click on the name of the person in the contact list which should give you a range of options, and one of these is Block. It will mean that you will not receive messages from this person anymore. Block is sometimes called 'Ignore', and if right-clicking doesn't work, have a look in your Preferences for this function. Then you can the Chat host or your Messenger provider by clicking the Help tab.
- **Tell your parent or caregiver/report if you receive sexually explicit images from someone online,** or if you are solicited sexually. Contact your local police or report incidents to <http://www.cybertip.ca>.
- **Look after each other.** Giving out your friend's personal information online is a really bad thing to do, as it could put them at risk. Look after and respect your friends while you are online. If someone you have accepted on your buddy or contacts list is acting weird, don't pass him or her on to a friend. You could be putting your friend at risk. Just block them and report them to an adult.

Related information may be found at:

www.microsoft.com/athome/security/children/childrenonline.msp <http://www.chatdanger.com>
<http://www.bewebaware.ca>