

## **For TEENS: MySpace/Internet Guidelines**

1. Never publicly post in ANY online forum any personally identifiable information.
  - a. What is personally identifiable information? It's any personal information that could be used to find or identify you in real life. This could be such information as your real name, address, telephone number, cell number, your sports team, health club, or links to websites or other profiles that might give this information away.
  - b. Even without meaning to, you can give this information away by taking a pic in front of your car with your license plate or home address showing in the photo. This information could be misused to steal your identity, guess your passwords, cyberstalk or harass you or by predators who really want to hurt you.
2. While it's fun to meet new people online, always remember that the friends you make online should NEVER replace people you know and are friends with in real life. No matter how often you have chatted with someone or how much you think you know about them, you never really know who you are chatting with online.
3. Don't reply to spam.
  - a. Invest in a good spam filter or reach out to your ISP and see what anti-spam services they offer.
  - b. You can also visit [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) and learn about the two e-mail trick, creating one for public use and another for your friends.
  - c. Always use a disposable free e-mail address, like yahoo, hotmail or msn.
4. Being online does not make you completely anonymous. There are ways that people use to discover real life information about the people they meet online.
  - a. Sometimes the code on the top of your e-mail, or used when you post anything online can tell people where you go to school, work or access the Internet.
  - b. If you are really worried that someone may try and track you back to your offline location, use an anonymizer e-mail or surfing service.
  - c. And never post from work, unless you want your employer to know what your doing and saying.
5. Don't be naïve!! If someone makes you an offer that sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
  - a. There is no one in Nigeria who is actually going to give you 30 million bucks, and that girl you don't know who just emailed you doesn't want you to watch her webcam because you're cute.
  - b. No reputable bank, ISP or other online service will EVER ask you for your password via email or instant message or send you a link to their site if there is a "security breach."
  - c. If someone is making you uncomfortable on email or instant messenger, most programs will let you BLOCK them. You don't have to talk to anyone you don't want to.
6. Treat others with respect, and expect the same from them. Don't be obnoxious.
  - a. Online arguments are known as "flaming". Do not go there.
  - b. Many times these incidents can escalate into off-line harassment. Harassing people online is against the Terms of Service guidelines of just about every ISP.
  - c. Do not harass others online. If you do it can get your service revoked.
7. If you ever feel like you're in real danger from someone online, tell someone you trust and then go directly to your local law enforcement agency.
  - a. Don't delete the message.
  - b. Also, a printout won't be enough. The police will need the live communication to check out the headers and other coding to trace the sender or poster.
8. A little common sense can go a long way online. Keep it safe.

9. If you are thinking about running away, a friend from online may not be the best person to talk to. If there is no adult in your community you can find to talk to, call the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000. The Switchboard will be able to give you honest, useful answers to some of your questions about what to do when you are depressed, abused, or thinking about running away.<sup>2</sup>
10. Many Internet Service Providers (ISP) have rules about online behavior. If you disobey an ISP's rules, your ISP may penalize you by disabling your account, and sometimes every account in a household, either temporarily or permanently.

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from Children Online: The ABCs for Parenting: When Is Your Child Ready by The Children's Partnership. Reprinted with permission of The Children's Partnership. <http://www.childrenpartnership.org>

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**Additional Resources:**

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: [www.ncmec.org](http://www.ncmec.org)

MySpace.com: [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

Netsmartz Workshop: Keeping Kids and Teens Safer on the Internet: <http://www.netsmartz.org/>

Wired Safety: [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)