

10 Tweens! Follow These Internet Safety Rules and Keep You Safe

You're growing up and people are starting to treat you more like a grown-up every day! These online safety tips are designed to not only help keep you safe while online but help you make better decisions when surfing the net. Your family loves you and cares for your online safety, so have a read at these tips and put yourself in a position of smart surfer your parents can trust.



1 Always remember that your parents or guardian love you and want to help you be safe. They're here for you to talk to if there's anything you want to know. It may start to feel strange telling them about the things you like and what you did today but everyone feels like that when they're growing up. They want to know about you and it makes them happy when you share.

2 Your friends may have phones and computers in their rooms but your parents say that you're not ready for those privileges yet. What does that mean? It doesn't mean that they don't love you or that they don't want you to have what you want. It does mean that you may need to talk to them and ask, "Why can't I have a computer in my room yet?" Listen to what they say. They want to hear your input and will probably help you figure out a way to compromise!



3 Websites and chat rooms are exciting places to be... there are new people to meet and cool things to talk about! It's very important to be smart when using these sites and services. When signing up to use a site, make sure that your user name and password don't have any part of your name or where you live. Check with a parent or guardian about filling out the profile on the sites. When you create your account, give your sign in information to your parents to keep safe. Don't share it with anyone else.

4 The mall and shopping are a lot of fun. Looking at all the cool clothes and stuff you can buy and hanging out with your friends is a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon. You probably also have some favorite online stores you like to window shop when it's too late to go to the mall or spending time with friends in your room. It may be tempting to make a purchase but always check with a parent or guardian before entering financial information or your name and address.

5 Sitting in front of a computer can create the sense of operating inside a technological "bubble" where our words and actions don't affect anyone. It's important to understand that you're still talking to and interacting with people. Using your manners and the rules of right and wrong still apply even if you can't see the person you're talking to online.

6 English class may or may not be your favorite subject but you talk to most of your internet friends through writing. It may seem silly but people get their first impressions of you from what you type and how you type it. You want them to have a good impression, right? Correct spelling, good grammar and learning how to write well are all things to work on when online.

7 Why buy a song when you can download it? But did you know that downloading music and movies off the internet can make your computer sick? There can be viruses, worms and other "bugs" (computer speak for bad programs) in the stuff you download that can break your computer. It can also be illegal to download certain things and you can get in a lot of trouble. If you want some music, ask your parents or guardian if you can buy it off iTunes or get a subscription to Rhapsody.

8 You may have internet friends that have been buddies for a long time. You talk all the time and share every little secret. Unfortunately, it's not a good idea to meet even the best online buddies in person. Too many things can go wrong and your friend may not be the person they say they are. If your friend ever asks to meet in person, just tell them, "No Thank You!" and immediately tell your parent or guardian.



9 There's a lot of information and people online. Sometimes it's true, sometimes it's not. It's easy to believe a lot of the stuff you can find on the internet but be careful about what you read and who you talk to. If anything or anyone makes you uncomfortable or confused, talk to an adult that you trust. They'll help you figure out what's true and what's not.

10 You may be surfing along, clicking here and clicking there and suddenly a window pops up saying that you're not allowed to access a site. Your parents might have installed some software that checks the website you want to look at for anything that might not be good for you to see. Instead of getting mad or trying to figure out how to get around the software, ask your parents if you can talk to them. If the site you want to see isn't harmful to you, ask to look at it together. That way, you're showing your parents that you have good judgement and that they can trust you. If the site isn't harmful, they'll probably let you use it. If it is, talk about why it's not a good thing for you to look at right now. The more you talk to your parents about stuff online, the more you will learn to trust each other.

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