

Internet and Social Media/Social Networking/Cyber-bullying (Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc.)

The Internet has opened up a world of opportunities for everyone. Social Communication Technology/Social Networking (i.e. Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc.) is a part of our everyday lives since we utilize this technology to remain in touch with others. Most of society utilizes Social Media in the way it is intended. However, when an individual terrorizes another with words and images via the internet, it harms the entire community. Therefore, safeguards must be put into place to keep all members of the community safe and free from violence (i.e. cyber-bullying). Everyone has the responsibility of preventing cyber-violence in the following ways:

Families:

- **Review** account settings and terms and conditions with their children regarding the use of Social Media, including cell phones, and point out the consequences for misuse of the technology.
- **Monitor** children's use of the computer and their social media accounts. Also monitor passwords, phone numbers, etc.
- **Use** the parental controls for children under age 17. Parents should not allow their children to block parental access to their accounts.
- **Be aware** that cell phones with internet capabilities may also contribute to students' retrieval of inappropriate information.
- **Report** any misuse of the Social Communication Technology with the website creators of the offending websites.
- **Provide** police officers with information necessary for prosecuting those who misuse the social communication technology.
- **Communicate** with youth in a non-accusatory manner if they have a question about the use of social media.
- **Be present** and open to communication when youth are confronted with social media conflicts.
- **Set aside** time to have personal interaction with their children so that they will not isolate themselves with social media.
- **Adhere to** the age-requirement use of social media. (In 2010 the minimum age was 14).
- **Discuss** with your children the saying that "words can hurt as much as fists."
- **Attend** workshops for parents, caregivers, and people of all ages on how to safely navigate cyber technology, and how to use security and privacy settings that might already be in place.

Media, Education, Business and Corporate Communities:

- **Inform** students that potential and future employers and universities and colleges might use the internet to search for personal information on possible new employees and/or candidates for work-study programs
- **Develop** norms for use of the social communication tools in the workplace and have all members on their sites agree to use of the norms.
- **Produce** literature to inform the communities of the benefits and consequences for using Social Communication Technology/Social Media.

- **Create** a mechanism for employees to report inappropriate use of the Social Communication Technology/Social Media.
- **Develop** “On-Line Safety Programs to present to parents, communities of faith, community and social organizations, pediatricians, and others.
- **Develop** marketing strategies for social media and anti-bullying initiatives for schools, university and colleges, social service and government agencies.
- **Invite** media to become partners in promoting internet safety. Encourage their ‘buy-in’ for advancing communication via posters, PSAs, billboard ads, newspapers, videos, You Tube, etc. Engage them in the dialogue as well.
- **Publicize** internet safety tips through religious and social service organizations, libraries, parent/school organizations, school assemblies, pediatrician and doctors’ offices, and media resources.
- **Create** a campaign for “Google Day” or “Go Google Yourself” throughout the community, or even nationally, to encourage people to research what information about themselves may be available on the Internet.
Ask government agencies to broadcast and distribute internet safety information to their clients and constituencies.
- **Investigate** and apply for grants which will enable organizations to address the issues of the negative uses of social media, including cyber-bullying.
- **Prosecute** individuals that utilize social communication technology inappropriately.

Youth and anyone else using social media:

- **Become** cyber savvy. Understand the meaning of “Too Much Information” (TMI).
- **Practice** appropriate use of social media.
- **Participate** in open lines of communication with their parents about use of technology and the people with whom they communicate.
- **Report** to parents any inappropriate conduct that occurs on the social websites.
- **Be cautious** about who to accept as one’s friend and any friend requests on social media forums. Do not give out personal information to strangers or people who they do not trust.
- **Avoid** adding people to social media lists from friends whose mutual friends they may not recognize.
- **Investigate** a requester’s profile before accepting a request. Verify and confirm the person’s identity or ignore the friend request.
- **Choose** whether to make pictures either public or private to prevent cloning or fraud.
- **Use** common sense about what is being uploaded on the internet to avoid exploitation of personal information.
- **Avoid** putting any personal or family information on any social media website.
- **Choose** pictures wisely for social media websites. Beware of personal surroundings and reflective surfaces such as mirrors or glasses when taking pictures that can be uploaded to social media.
- **Don’t** send messages to anyone who has posted personal messages felt to be inappropriate or unwanted. Remove them from one’s personal site.
- **Refrain** from posting negative status or comments on one’s profile page or anyone else’s that may cause regret. Don’t post anything on social media websites that wouldn’t be said to the person’s face.
- **Utilize** all private account settings when creating any social media account.
- **Do not** make private conversations public.
- **Minimize** the use of social media and maximize human interaction.
- **Acknowledge** the power of personal interaction as opposed to constant use of social media outlets and text messages. For example, a personal visit, eye to eye contact, or calling them on the phone.
- **Abstain** from using social media websites as a diary and/or main source of communication or expression.

- **Consider** using an 'avatar' (character or symbol) instead of actual faces as the picture for one's personal profile.
- **Don't exploit** other people's personal conflicts, i.e. brawls, arguments, or incidents of cyber-bullying through social media.
- **Beware** of sexual predators, sex offenders, or suspicious-sounding persons who might be older and prey on younger people.

Internet Safety:

- **Be aware** that any personal information posted to the Internet is there forever. Be cautious when doing uploads or posting blogs, videos, pictures, and/or statuses, etc., on the Internet.
- **Refrain** from putting personal information on the internet which may be harmful to one's future.
- **GOOGLE yourself.** Research the Internet to find out what exists with regard to one's personal information or history.
- **Do not use** webcams to record and then post acts or activities for which permission has not been granted, particularly those acts or activities which are obviously private and/or sensitive.
- **Know** that acts of invasion of privacy through the internet could lead to five years of imprisonment or, if considered a hate crime, up to ten (10) years of imprisonment.
- **Talk** to family members about the dangers of scams.
- **Realize** that legitimate financial institutions do not and will not solicit funds through the Internet. Beware of money scams.
- **Report** any incidents of someone asking for personal bank account information, as well as any incidents of intimidation to obtain such.
- **Set up** pop-up blockers on personal computers to protect them from viruses.
- **Utilize** the "report as spam" button to filter out unwanted, potentially harmful, or offensive email messages.

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