



Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for Parents

Issue # 17

SAFE USE OF THE INTERNET

Anytime is a good time to review some guidelines for the safe use of the Internet. The Internet can be a great place to learn, explore, talk with friends or be entertained. But it can also be dangerous, threatening the safety of our children.

Here are some age-specific things you can do to keep your children safe:

2-4 years old:



- sit at the computer with your child
- look at sites that are available and appropriate for their age and development
- add acceptable sites to your "Favourites list"
- install Internet-filtering tools and software that blocks pop-ups
- role model smart and safe use of the Internet

5-7 years old:

- use child-friendly search engines that have parental controls
- teach your children to never give out information about themselves or family members
- do not allow your children to use Instant Messaging (IM), email, chat rooms or message boards without your direct help or supervision



8-10 years old:



- look at games your child is playing and make sure they are age-appropriate
- be familiar with your child's login information and email address
- help your child set up online profiles when they join a site
- use family email accounts when signing up for games

10-14 years old:

- limit the amount of time spent online; make house rules; sign an age-related contract (see Microsoft.com/famwebrules.msp)
- restrict the use of adult search engines
- monitor webcam use and any posting of pictures online
- do not allow your child to be in unregulated chat rooms
- insist they agree never to meet an online friend in person
- be aware of the websites they go to
- talk to children about hate sites (e.g. uglypeople.com) and about symbols (e.g. swastikas), hurtful racial or sexual comments, racial or sexual cartoons



For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying



Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for Parents

As children grow up and gain more computer skills, it is up to you keep your children safe:

- Keep the computer in an open area.
- Supervise your children while they are using the computer.
- Set clear age-related rules for use of the Internet that you all agree to (see Microsoft.com kidwebaddict.mspcx)
- Encourage your children to tell you about their Internet experiences. Teach them to trust their instincts. Encourage your children to tell you if they are feeling uncomfortable with anything or anyone online. Talk openly; encourage your children to share their feelings with you or with another trusted adult they feel safe talking with.
- Help your children choose a login name that does not give any identifying information.
- Is your child Internet-dependent? Is it affecting their school performance, health or relationships with family and friends? Find out how much time they spend on the computer.
- Help your child find balance with other activities: physical activity, play with other children, arts and crafts, reading.
- Teach your children that the difference between right and wrong on the Internet is the same as in real life – show them how to respect others online.
- Talk about friendship - what it is and what it is not.
- Teach your children not to copy the work of others from the Internet (music, games); this is illegal.
- Teach your children NOT to believe everything that is online.
- Control your children's online activity with good quality software.



It is important to let your children know that you will be:

- Looking at the websites they visit (by reviewing their history file)
- Checking their instant messaging (IM) logs (e.g. MSN, AIM, Y!, Messenger)
- Making sure their messaging is set up so that no one can speak to them without their permission
- Adjusting web browser settings (assign security levels to websites)
- Using software to allow only approved contacts for children (see Microsoft/family/guidelines/ basics.mspcx)



The information provided in this newsletter has been adapted from Microsoft Canada's Take Back the Net website, A Parent's Guide for Children.

Websites for Parents:

www.kidsintheknow.ca
www.bewebaware.ca www.netsmartz.org
www.cyberbullying.ca
www.kinsa.net

www.wiredkidz.org
www.microsoft.ca/onlinesafety
www.badguy patrol.cz



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying