



INTERNET SAFETY FOR FAMILIES

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

A MESSAGE FROM



**Attorney General
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Cyber Safety Matters

As Attorney General, my top priority is the safety and well-being of our community, especially our children. The digital world offers incredible opportunities but also significant risks, particularly for our young people. From cyberbullying to online enticement, children are increasingly vulnerable to various forms of digital exploitation. This comprehensive guide is designed to equip parents, guardians, and educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to protect children online. By understanding the dangers, recognizing warning signs, and implementing effective safety strategies, we can create a safer digital environment. Let's work together to ensure our children can navigate the online world securely and responsibly.

QUICK DEFINITIONS

BLOG

Online journal or diary

DM, OR DIRECT MESSAGE

Send or receive messages that are (for the sake of argument) private

FILE-SHARING PROGRAM

Enables the direct share of a file, like a movie, photograph, or audio file

GEOLOCATION SERVICES

Shares your location with friends or even the public

GROOMING

When adults manipulate minors into sexual relationships

IM, OR INSTANT MESSAGING

Quick, real-time digital chat

LIVE STREAM

Interactive video created and viewed in real-time

ONLINE ENTICEMENT

When adults pretend to be kids with intent to abduct or forge a sexual bond

PREDATORY OFFENDER

Someone who uses the Internet to connect with minors for sex

SG-CSAM

Self-Generating Child Sexual Abuse Material, or explicit material of a child taken by the child

SEXTING

Use of text or instant message to send sexual messages, images, and videos

SEXTORTION

When children are threatened or blackmailed, often with possibility of sharing nude or sexual images of them, by a person who demands their sexual content/activity or money

SMARTPHONE

A computer in your pocket which enables you to view, create, edit, and share documents

SOCIAL MEDIA

Internet applications that support communication between users, no matter where they are

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE

A global online community where people meet and share information

VLOG

A blog, or digital diary, but in video format

WEBCAM

Video cameras in most computers that can be accessed online



DID YOU KNOW?

FAST FACTS

- While the majority of sexual solicitations occur among older teens, kids as young as 9 have received inappropriate solicitations online
- A groomer might take months to solicit your child for sexual content, or they might be able to acquire explicit material within minutes of meeting online
- Recent studies suggest that less than 20% of teens have sexted, while more than 30% have received a sext
- Sextortion, or exploitation where children are threatened or blackmailed over nude or sexual images, is a trend mainly targeting male children, and can happen over the course of a few minutes. Teach your children not to comply with demands.
- Nearly 50% of teens have been cyberbullied, while roughly 14.4% have admitted to cyberbullying others.
- Most teens who committed suicide due to cyberbullying were bullied both at school and online; however, suicide is rare and is often the result of a combination of factors, including mental illness and depression.

BEST COURSE OF ACTION

HAVE HONEST CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD THAT:

- Provide accurate information they can trust
- Set boundaries on what to post and not post
- Help them understand the risks involved
- Establishes what's appropriate vs. inappropriate behavior
- Empowers them to say no, block accounts, and tell the truth

Fear is not an effective tactic.

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE ONLINE?

Rule of Thumb: If it's not okay to do offline, it's not okay to do online.

Inappropriate Content:

- Bullying someone online
- Offensive language
- Hate speech
- Threats of violence
- Underage drinking or drug use
- Geolocation of school, home address, or favorite places
- Passwords or information related to passwords
- Private family information
- Live streams from their bedroom or secluded places

WHAT'S INAPPROPRIATE?

CHILDREN ENGAGE IN SEXTING BECAUSE THEY MIGHT...

- Think it's funny to share with friends
- Be trying to impress a crush
- Be responding to peer pressure/threats
- Be experimenting with relationships or sexual behavior
- Believe it's a sign of growing up
- Feel pressured to make snap decisions
- Perceive a benefit, or a rush of adrenaline
- Believe this something all teens do (even though roughly 80% of teens do not engage in sexting)

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF POSTING INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT:

- Damage relationships, reputation, and standing with your school
- Can result in suspension from school, sports, or clubs
- If it's illegal, it can result in being charged with a crime
- Can come back to haunt you, whether it's related to college, scholarships, or future employment
- Increases risk of identity theft, online scams, and hacking
- Can be a major source of embarrassment, shame, guilt, rumors, gossip and humiliation.

CYBERBULLYING

WHAT DOES CYBERBULLYING LOOK LIKE?

- Sending mean texts to fellow child, which can be threatening or even harassing
- Altering a picture in some way with the goal of embarrassing or shaming someone
- Creating a fake social media profile with altered images meant to shame someone
- Posting videos or images meant to embarrass someone
- Spreading rumors or gossip online
- Resharing images to humiliate someone
- Forcing someone to humiliate or harm themselves

THE DANGERS OF CYBERBULLYING:

- This content can spread far and wide thanks to social media, and much faster than in-person bullying, causing significant damage to the individual being bullied
- Can involve a wider audience while open to unlimited shares, meaning that it can follow a person online indefinitely
- Children cannot escape digital bullying as it exists outside of in-person interactions, meaning it follows them home as well as through time, occurring 24/7 online
- Can cause depression, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal ideation, low self-esteem, social isolation, substance use, insomnia, and more



SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BEING CYBERBULLIED:

- They suddenly stop using their computer or cellphone
- Nervous when receiving an email, message, or text
- Don't want to go to school, or get anxious when they must attend
- They've isolated themselves from others, including family and friends
- You've noticed significant mood changes

SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS A CYBERBULLY:

- Using the computer at all hours of the night
- Laugh excessively while online
- Avoid discussions about that they're doing
- Makes harmful or belittling jokes about others
- Complete lack of empathy
- Shows problems with authority figures

CYBERBULLYING

HELP YOUR CHILD AGAINST CYBERBULLYING:

- **Be supportive.** Be the safe adult that your child can turn to if they find themselves in this situation, or worse. If your child comes to you, take them seriously but also stay calm.
- **Save the evidence.** Take screenshots, print messages, and collect proof for the school or even law enforcement.
- **Block bullies.** Tell your child not to respond to messages from a cyberbully and help them block the accounts involved.
- **Set up new accounts.** Help your child create new accounts online with stronger privacy features. Tell them to only share this information with friends they trust.
- **Talk to the school.** Most cyberbullying involves fellow classmates, which is why you should discuss these exchanges with teachers and administrators for further support.
- **Report it.** You can report cyberbullying to the website, app, or social media platform, as well as the CyberTipline.

GENERAL RULES

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES:

- **No private channels.** Keep conversations on mainstream platforms, not private ones like Signal. Explain that someone suggesting a move to a more private space to continue a conversation may not have the best intentions.
- **Have open discussions** about online friend lists and what they discuss on digital platforms. Keep in mind that friendships may be forced worldwide focused around common interests; but transparency is necessary to weed out predators who may ask increasingly personal and potential inappropriate questions.
- **Create safety parameters** for your child's digital life. This can include monitoring the privacy settings on their devices, learning about reporting options for various websites and platforms, helping them create strong passwords, and finding ways to monitor their activity without making them feel as if they have zero privacy. You should also have a discussion about images they can share online or even in private messages.

GENERAL RULES

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES:

- **Teach you children** how to stand up to someone who is threatening them, how to say no, hold strong, and tell an adult they trust so the experience can be reported to NCMEC immediately, which will then alert law enforcement.
- **Set a code of conduct** for your children, which includes rules about meeting older teens or individuals offline. Also set an example about what a healthy relationship looks and feels like, which will help your child recognize an unhealthy one faster (with an understanding that someone who pressures you for sexual pictures is not someone they should trust). Finally, make rules around their actions outside of the home, such as sharing their location with you, setting a safe word or phrase should they need you to pick them up, and sharing details about who they are with and why.
- **Support your child** and reaffirm that if they get extorted or if images they shared are publicly released that it's not their fault, even if they made the mistake of sharing compromising images. Regardless of the circumstances, this is a horrible situation and a child needs support from a trusted adult, who can help them understand that

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES:

things can get better and that they will get through this.

- **Discuss resharing content** which may harm others, such as sexual content another child has shared. Make it clear that this action can cause significant harm to another person, but also that it is a major violation of trust that exposes another person to bullying, ridicule, shame, or worse.
- **Teach your child** that, while they don't have to be friends with everyone, they do have to show others respect. Emphasize that bullying others is unacceptable, even if you're just a bystander or minimally involved.



RED FLAGS

RED FLAGS:

- Someone sends a friend request then immediately starts asking for photographs and selfies
- Excessive flattery followed by making the child feel guilty or ashamed
- Sending your child gift cards, cellphones, and other gifts related to their interests
- Asking your child to keep secrets
- Manipulating the child to turn against family and friends (they don't understand you like I do)
- Talking about adult subjects like dating, sex, and pleasure
- Blackmailing the child with their own content, secrets, or choices
- Asking to meet face-to-face

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Gifts sent to them through the mail
- Unknown numbers calling
- Your child minimizes or hides their screen as you approach
- Your child rejects family and friends, preferring to be online
- Your child gets upset when they can't access the Internet

SEE THE SIGNS?

If you see these signs, talk to your children. Learn what they're doing online, who they are talking to, and get help if you suspect something is wrong. If you discover that your child is having inappropriate conversations or relationships online, file a report with the website or app on which these conversations have taken place, contact the www.CyberTipline.org, and engage with law enforcement.

WHAT TO DO IN CASES OF SEXTORTION:

- Do not comply with demands.
- Do not delete your account (that destroys important evidence).
- Contact the social media platform, app or website to inform them.
- Report it to CyberTipline, even if you're already reported it to the app in question. This will ensure law enforcement in your area gets involved.
- If sexual content has been posted online, go to <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org> to get help removing it from the Internet.
- NOTE: Even if your child does not engage in sextortion attempts, still report the attempt.



CONSIDER THESE STRATEGIES:

- Look into filtering and monitoring software to protect your child from sexually explicit content
- Consult your cellphone provider for ways monitor your child's phone
- Research built-in monitoring options or software for smart devices, computers, and cellphones
- Check security features for apps so that your child can be better protected when they post
- Explore filtering services for programs and websites. For example, Google offers free SafeSearch as well as parental controls.
- Apply privacy features on popular websites or browsers
- And if something does happen, don't just pull the plug on their Internet access — make it a learning opportunity because the Internet is here to stay.

REPORT IT!

NCMEC's CyberTipline is the nation's centralized reporting system for the online exploitation of children. The public and electronic service providers can make reports of suspected online enticement children for sexual acts, child sexual molestation, child sexual abuse material, child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, unsolicited obscene materials sent to a child, misleading domain names, and misleading words or digital images on the Internet. Children, family members, friends, and professionals can report to our CyberTipline at www.CyberTipline.org.



RESOURCES

LINKS:

Is Your Explicit Content Out There?

<https://www.NCMEC.org/gethelpnow/isyoudoexplicitcontentoutthere>

Take It Down

<https://www.NCMEC.org/takeitdown>

Sextortion - Learn More

<https://www.NCMEC.org/theissues/sextortion>

Get Help/Victim & Family Support

<https://www.NCMEC.org/gethelpnow/support>

Resources for Survivors of Sexual Abuse Material

<https://www.NCMEC.org/gethelpnow/csam-resources>

No Filter

<https://nofiltr.org>

Amaze

<https://amaze.org>

ABOUT THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

If you are seeking justice for yourself in a personal, corporate, or family matter, you try to get the best legal representation. But if an entire State or its political subdivisions are injured or victimized by the federal government, a multi-national corporation, or even another State -- that requires an Attorney General.

The Office of the Attorney General *is* the Louisiana Department of Justice, and we work to protect the people of Louisiana as whole. We fight for Louisiana's natural resources, investigate fraud, secure justice for our most vulnerable, and so much more.

We also provide educational content meant to help you make wise choices based on guidance you can trust. With that in mind, we hope this guide to Fair Housing has been enlightening and instructive; but should you need more information, please feel free to reach out to our office or your local parish representative.

ABOUT
ATTORNEY GENERAL
LIZ MURRILL



AG Liz Murrill is committed to defending the rule of law and protecting the people of our State. She has argued multiple cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and served as lead counsel in many cases challenging federal overreach, ranging from open border policies and attacks on religious liberty to COVID-19 mandates and First Amendment violations. With more than 30 years experience working in state and federal government, including eight as Louisiana's first Solicitor General, Liz Murrill has been a champion for women, children, and victims demanding justice. Now she is leading the fight to preserve our rights, our industries, and Louisiana's unique way of life. You can learn more at www.AGLizMurrill.com.



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