Keeping Girls Cybersafe

10 Tips for Girls

www.cybersafegirl.ca

1 Take Cyber-violence Seriously
Cyber-violence is the use of the internet to harm or intimidate another person.This includes name calling, teasing, threatening, starting rumours, posting embarrassing or degrading pictures, or encouraging violence. It may also provoke violence offline. Another form of cyber-violence is sexual exploitation. Sexual predators use the internet to meet young girls for sexual purposes. Be careful when using Facebook, blogs, online games, and emails. You can take steps to prevent all forms of cyber-violence.

2 Tell Someone You Trust
Don't be afraid to talk about cyber-violence. If you see or experience cyber-violence, tell someone - a parent, teacher, coach, neighbour, sibling, friend or police officer.

3 Report Cyber-violence to Police
Some forms of cyber-violence are criminal acts under the Criminal Code of Canada. This ranges from harassment and intimidation to luring a child and child pornography. These are all illegal, you don't have to put up with them and you can report them to the police.

4 Take Responsibility
Take responsibility for what you do. Treat yourself and others with respect, fairness and equality. Don't follow the crowd. Don't give in to peer pressure. Refuse to take part in any form of violence or abuse, including cyber-violence.

5 Stay Calm
Try not to respond to cyber-violence with fear or anger. This can make things worse. Being violent or abusive yourself will not make you feel better.

6 Be a Friend
If you know a victim of cyber-violence, let them know that it's is not their fault, not fair, and not deserved. If the source of the violence is another student, talk to a teacher or administrator and ask for help.

7 Protect Yourself
Be careful online. Never open files from an unknown source. This may allow your computer to be tracked. Never reveal personal information (your age, address, etc) online or put it in your profile. Never send photographs of yourself to someone you don't know. Never agree to meet an online contact for the first time without a parent or guardian. Always tell an adult right away if you feel uncomfortable with something online.[1]

8 Remove Yourself from the Situation
If you receive a mean message, leave the activity or area (Facebook chat, online game, etc.). Never reply to harassing messages. You can even block the sender or "unfriend" them. This may stop the messages.[2]

9 Respect Yourself
You can't always control what other people think about you, but you can control how you present yourself online. Think about what you're posting – would you show that picture to your grandparents? Would you say that to someone's face? Everything you post online stays on the internet long after it's posted, so think twice before clicking send.[3]

10 Take Action
You don't have to put up with online bullying. Save harassing messages and forward them to your internet provider. Most have "acceptable use policies" and take action if guidelines are violated. You can also use website features to report harassing messages. For example, Facebook has a "report" option for offensive or inappropriate pages, groups or events. This option is confidential, so no one will know who made the report.[4]

[1] Media Awareness Network. (2010). Know the risks-Online predators. Retrieved from http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/wa_teachers/saf_passage_teachers/risks_predators.cfm
[2] Facebook. (2012). Playing it safe. Retrieved from http://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/teens/
[3] Weiner, J. (n.d.). A girl's guide to the digital world. In Dove. Retrieved from http://www.dove.us/docs/pdf/A_Girls_Guide_to_the_Digital_World.pdf
[4] Facebook. (2012.). Playing it safe. Retrieved from http://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/teens/

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