MONROE COUNTY PARENTS GUIDE TO
INTERNET SAFETY

The Internet is a tremendous tool which impacts our lives on a daily basis. It is a vast resource for both education and entertainment. Unfortunately, it can also be the breeding ground for predators and the source of unsolicited objectionable material. In order to protect our children we must be aware of the perils of cyberspace and communicate with our children the importance of web safety. This sheet provides simple guidelines to ensure a safe and enjoyable online experience.

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County Executive

essential tips

Spend time online with your children
Explore good sites together as a family activity. Set appropriate guidelines for Internet use and explain them to your children.

Set rules about the information your children are allowed to give out online
Educate them to never give out personal information like their name, home address, phone number, age, race, family income, school name or location, friends' names, credit card info or passwords.

Put the children's computer in a common area of the home
Be sure that the screen is visible to all.

Encourage your children to speak about good and bad Internet experiences
Let them know if they encounter material that worries or confuses them it's OK to talk with you about it.

Show your kids how to respect others online
Make sure they know that rules for good behavior don't change just because they're on a computer.

Teach your kids that not everything they read or see online is true
Encourage them to ask you if they're not sure.

Children should never arrange face-to-face meetings with online friends
Explain that people they meet online may not be who they say they are.

Children should never respond to messages that make them uncomfortable
They should ignore the sender, end the communication, and talk to a trusted adult right away.

Consider using content filtering software
Limit the amount of inappropriate material your children are exposed to by installing a content filtering solution. Be advised, children are often smart enough to get around these restrictions. Nothing can replace parental supervision and involvement.

Inquire about Internet use policies
What policies are in place at your children's school and local library?

internet terms

Decoding Internet chat lingo is an important monitoring skill that should not be overlooked. Here are a few examples to help you translate what teens are saying online:

PIR   Parent In Room
P911   Parent Alert
KPC   Keeping Parents Clueless
WYCM   Will You Call Me?
ASL   Age/Sex/Location

For a more comprehensive list of terms visit the following link:
http://www.theantidrug.com/E-Monitoring/internet-lingo.asp

filtering content

Web browsers like IE, Firefox and AOL allow modification of security settings and allowed sites. Go to your browser's **Tools** menu and choose **(Internet) Options** from the drop-down list. For enhanced protection look into software or services that filter out offensive material and sites. Below is a list of sites that offer content filtering solutions:

dansguardian.org *free download*
cyberpatrol.com
netnanny.com
cybersitter.com

In addition, contact your Internet Service Provider to see what site blocking restrictions and services they offer.

important contact information

Even without trying, your children can come across materials on the Internet that are obscene, pornographic, violent, hate filled, racist, or offensive in other ways. One type of material - child pornography - is illegal. You should report it to the Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling **1-800-THE LOST (843-5678)** or going to **http://www.missingkids.com**.
MissingKids.com also provides educational materials encouraging Internet safety. Other sites providing excellent resources are:
theantidrug.com, **protectkids.com**, **netsmartz.org** and **microsoft.com**.