

# ***GUIDE TO INTERNET SAFETY FOR CHILDREN***

**Ok, so when I'm online I like to .....**

## **Use Instant Messaging**

IM is great for chatting to your friends, its quick, you can set up contact lists so can see when your friends are on line at the same time as you and you can talk to more than one of them at the same time.

**Be Careful .....**

- **People aren't always what they seem, make sure that the people on your contact list are people that you know in the real world;**
- If people add you to their contact list and you don't know them use your blocking function to stop them from seeing you on line and then they won't be able to contact you.
- If you have a profile on IM, don't put too much personal information like your contact details, addresses or where you go to school. Use a cartoon character or symbol instead of a photo.

## **Use Chat Rooms**

Chat rooms can be a good way to stay in touch or to meet new people. Often these chat rooms can be set up based around particular topics or themes that you might have a particular interest in.

**Be Careful.....**

- **Remember** the anonymous nature of the internet makes it easy for people to pretend to be something that they are not. **Always** be careful about the kind of information that you give out in chat rooms.

- **Report** instances where you feel something is suspicious or not quite right. Tell an adult or someone you trust. Try and keep copies of any material that you think might help.
- Never arrange to meet up with people you don't know, that you have met in a chat room, without an adult or guardian present.

## Use Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter amongst others allow you to create your own profiles, linking to your friends' profiles, creating blogs and commenting on other peoples profiles and sharing photos.

### Be Careful.....

- Of giving out too much personal information. **Remember** that the information that you put on your profile can be seen by everybody. Once you place the information /photos on the Internet it can be seen and copied/used by others, i.e. you lose control over it, people may attempt to use it ways that you never intended. Use your privacy settings to protect yourself and limit what people other than your friends can see and do with your information.
- **Remember** People aren't always what they seem, you cannot assume that the information supplied by other users on their profiles is authentic. Be careful of accepting people into your chat areas. Think about the material you are going to share with these people. Is it the kind of stuff that you want everyone, including complete strangers?
- Of Cyber bullying. Be aware that people may use these sites to carry out bullying and harassment. They may attempt to use material from your profile in malicious ways, post nasty comments etc. **Remember** it is relatively easy to trace online bullies. Keep the evidence and bring it to the attention of someone you trust.

## Help Beat the Cyber bullies

### If you're being bullied

- **Save the evidence**
- **Don't respond in any shape or form to any provocation**
- **Tell an adult or someone you trust**

### Blogging

Blogging is an easy way for you to share your thoughts and opinions on a whole wide range of things. But it's important to remember that because blogs are on the internet, anyone maybe able to look at it. It's important to remember this so you think long and hard about what kind of information you really want to put out there for people to see.

Be Careful.....

- Try to limit the amount of personal information that you give out. People aren't always what they seem and such individuals may use information gleaned from your blogs to befriend you for their own reasons which may place you in danger.
- **Be aware of what you say.** While it is all well and good to have opinions on certain matters, it is important to aware of the impact of what you say may have on other. Posting inappropriate comments/pictures on blogs can be a particularly insidious form of cyber bullying. **Always think before you type!**

### OnlineGaming

Online Gaming can be a good way to interact and befriend new people while playing with or against them. Many people enjoy the challenge or competing with others or sharing their knowledge an experience to improve their skills and learn ways to beat thesystem.

### Be Careful.....

- Don't give out any personal information. Remember when gaming online other players don't need to know your real name, address or other personal contact details or information. Be wary of any other players who are looking for such information. They may not be who they seem to be.
- Never arrange to meet with someone you get to know through online gaming unless you have a parent or guardian with you. People aren't always who they say they are and you could be putting yourself in danger by doing this.

### P2P Sharing

'Peer to Peer' File Swapping or Filesharing can be a simple way to swap files that you are interested in, like music and movies for example with friends and other users on the internet..

### Be Careful.....

- **Harmful Material** – Be aware of the fact that on many P2P filesharing systems, files will often be misnamed to hide their actual content or even to entice people to open them.. **If you have any doubt about what a file may contain, don't open it!**
- **Using File-sharing software can at times compromise your privacy and security**, leaving you at risk from Spyware. It can sometimes lead to breaches of your privacy if you inadvertently share more of your computer files with other file-sharers than you mean to. Finally in some cases it can leave your computer more susceptible to the viruses infecting other machines on the P2P networks and to people trying to control computers remotely.
- **Illegal Usage** - Much of the material available on filesharing sites is protected by copyright. Infringement of this copyright may lead to legal action being taken against people who upload or download such materials and do not pay the appropriate charges levied by the owners. A significant number of cases have been taken by the music and film industry against individuals who have breached this copyright resulting in awards of thousands of euros against individuals, including children.

**Ok, so I know what the risks are but what do I do if I find if I find some material that might be illegal, or I have an experience that seems strange or wrong or makes me feel uncomfortable?**

If you find material that you think might be illegal, or if you're having experiences on the internet that don't seem right, then you should do the following:

### **REPORT IT!**

If you come across material that you think may be illegal, then you should report it to [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie). Note that this is an anonymous service and you do not have to give your name or any personal information.

### **What kind of material might be illegal?**

- Any material involving child pornography , child trafficking or child grooming
- Any racist or xenophobic material, i.e anything designed to incite hatred or discrimination.

[www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) exists to combat illegal material on the Internet. All reports are assessed and where content is found to be illegal action is taken. You may report content you suspect to be illegal encountered when using any of the following services:

- Websites (including sites for mobile WAP or equivalent)
- Unsolicited email\*\* (spam advertising illegal content)
- Peer-to-peer file sharing networks
- Online forums, bulletin boards, blogs, social networking sites
- Newsgroups (NTTP)
- Online chat rooms or instant messaging

**Remember!**

- If you are not sure if the material is illegal or not, it does not matter, report it to the Hotline and it will be assessed.
- The Hotline only deals with reports about content on the Internet. This service must not be used to report crime or suspected criminal activities taking place in the “real world”. Any such reports should be made directly to [An Garda Síochána](#), either at your local Garda station or by using the free Garda Confidential telephone 1800 666 111.
- Reporting to the Hotline is not a substitute for notifying An Garda Síochána. Urgent situations where persons may be in immediate danger should always be reported to An Garda Síochána directly.

### **TALK TO SOMEONE!**

- If you have a bad experience on the Internet, or if you feel uncomfortable with any situation don't be afraid to tell some. Talk to parents, friends or a trusted adult.
- **The Samaritans** ([www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)) - **Lo Call** 1850 60 90 90
- **ISPCC** ([www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)) - (01) 6767960
- **Childline** ([www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)) - **Freefone** 1800 66 66 66

**Barnardos** ([www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)) - (01) 453 0355/**Lo Call:** 1850 222 300