



EASTLAND

Community Unit Schools

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While the Internet offers a world of resources with the click of a mouse, parents need to be aware that it can also pose a variety of dangers for our children. Among those dangers are viruses that could harm your computer, pedophiles who are trying to meet children, and criminals interested in accessing personal information in order to steal your child's identity. Parents must be prepared to recognize these dangers so they can help their children protect themselves. The following are some safety tips for parents of elementary students who use the Internet:

1. **Place the computer in a common area.** We strongly suggest your child not have a computer in his or her room, or at least no Internet access on the computer in his or her room.
2. **Learn to use the Internet.** Experience cyberspace with your child and learn how to check the computer's "History" to see what websites your child is visiting. If you do not know how to check your child's Internet history instructions are provided at this website http://www.ehow.com/how_5058622_internet-history.html.

Teach Your Children the Following Rules

- Never accept files or downloads from unknown sources; this includes familiar sources if you were not expecting them.
- Choose an email address/ screen name that DOES NOT contain any part of your name, age, gender, interests or favorite activities.
- Do Not fill out a profile without parent review and approval.
- Never give out your real name, telephone or cell phone number(s), mailing address, or passwords.
- Do Not enter chat rooms.
- Do Not post photographs in publicly accessible sites.
- The settings for ANY social networking profiles* should be PRIVATE so that new friends are accepted only if they are known to the child AND parent.

***Social networking sites include: MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, Google+1, etc. . . Most Social Networking sites (including Facebook) have a user policy that prohibits anyone under the age of 13 from having a profile on the site.**

3. **Talk to your child about the dangers online.**

Your child should know that:

- Accepting files or downloads from unknown sources can bring a virus that could harm the computer.
- Giving away personal information can lead to unwelcome contact.
- People may not be who they say they are online -- predators roam cyberspace.

Open communication with your child is vital. Your children need to feel they can come to you without fear of losing Internet privileges if they encounter frightening communications or images.

4. **If you have a webcam, your child should use it ONLY if you are present.** Posting pictures online or sending images can have dangerous consequences. Parents should control such activity.

There are Internet Safety Links and more information on the district's website under the Departments/Technology link. A direct link to the information is <http://www.eastland308.com/Page/224>.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's activity online, feel free to contact me by email or phone.

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