# Cyberbullying, Sexting & Social Media: Children's Online Safety for Parents
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Many up-to-date and valuable resources are available at:
**www.brookwood.edu/guidelines_parents_regarding_technology_and_children**

## 10 Internet Skills Our Children Should learn:
1. _Never_ share your passwords or passcodes with anyone (including friends) except your parents; _Always_ passcode protect your phone!
2. Create strong passwords at least 10 characters long; using symbols, UPPER, lowercase & numbers
3. Take responsibility for your actions, posts, texts, and online/smart phone behavior
4. Stop and think before you reply; if angry, hurt or upset DON'T REPLY online or via text. Talk in person or over the phone!
5. Mouse-over and look where a link points to _before_ clicking
6. Be skeptical online; just because it came from a friend's account, doesn't mean he/she sent it
7. Don't respond to an online quiz, survey or advert –many do not have your best interest in mind and only serve to erode your privacy or misuse your personal information
8. Clicking the "Like" button for some things comes with risks and reduces privacy
9. If it seems too good to be true, then it probably is (Meaning it isn't true!)
10. Check your accounts and privacy settings monthly. Carefully review the apps you use for your online/smartphone accounts – If it is free, it often means that YOU are the product and are giving up something that makes money for the app/site

## Internet Rules Every Parent Should Consider for His/Her Child:
1. Parents _should_ have their child's password to all online accounts, especially social networking sites until age ~ 16/17.
2. Parents _should_ monitor/filter their child's web use, texting and smartphone
3. Parents _should_ be the administrators of their children's computers and the child's account should not have administrative rights to install software
4. Set limits/boundaries to texting, chatting and amount of time spent in social media
5. Set limits to time & activities using technology in general
6. It is NOT acceptable to friend strangers, respond to strangers or accept strangers as followers
7. Guard your privacy & reputation online! A good online reputation is hard to build but easy to destroy
8. Teens are expected to be kind & respectful online, and report problems and harassment to parents
9. Parent's passwords should not be known by their children
10. Parents _have_ the right to take cell phones, game controllers, or other i-devices at night from their children
11. Parents _have_ the right to shut off the Internet after ___ o'clock
12. Parents should set very clear expectations for their children about posting photos and videos online or via smartphones. Children should never post photos/videos of other children without permission from the parents of the other child.
13. Parents have every right to check a child's text messages or any other virtual communication. Deleted messages _may_ result in consequences.
14. Children should never sign up for online accounts, or install new apps/software without a parents' permission.
15. Children should _never_ respond to mean or harassing comments, posts, or group texts.
16. Create technology-free zones and times. E.g. family dinner time and family outings

## Take Action: What to Tell Your Child:
- Don't "friend" bullies; don't be an audience for a bully
- Think & *stop* before posting jokes, offensive remarks or images that could embarrass someone else
- Report threats, cruelty and meanness to an adult (teacher, parent or coach)
- Anonymous online communication is very risky and often very hurtful. Avoid using apps, sites and services that allow it to occur.
- *UPSTAND*: Offer support to friends being harassed/bullied (public or private support, but immediate support!)
- Massachusetts Cyberbullying law offers protections but you have to be brave and report the events first
- Take your online reputation seriously; it will be searchable on the Internet for *many* years!
- Speak out against cyberbulling & cruelty; be kind and support kindness!
- Stay on your guard / Be skeptical online –It is easy to deceive others online or via a smartphone
- *Nothing* is private online! Not texts, not Snapchat photos, nor Instagram messages.... Etc.
- Tell me when you are afraid or uncomfortable online; I will try not to overreact and listen
- Protect your privacy online. It is more important than you understand now
- Be the same online as you are in person
- Online "social combat" is common but it isn't the norm in real life! Don't participate in it. It takes greater character to walk away from it than it does to respond in kind

## Take Action: What to Do as a Parent
- Keep the lines of communication open and emotionally safe for your child
- Try not to overreact; consider offering your child opportunities to speak freely without interruption, judgment or even a response from you for a period of time. Just listen.
- Listen with compassion first, work on strategies second
- Work with your school, teachers and administration to resolve conflict and issues
- Encourage your child to report bullying and not be a by-stander
- Encourage your child to publicly or privately offer support to a victim
- Set limits on technology use & friending behavior
- Children make mistakes often. This fact is a part of growing up. Help your child take ownership and responsibility of their mistakes. Help them apologize and make amends.

## Survival Guide for Parents:
- Have non-negotiable expectations for your teens
- Only allow Internet access in a public location in your home
- Consider taking all smart phones or gaming devices at night and during sleepovers.
- Explain that the word "delete" doesn't exist online;
- Teach your child that the only chance to avoid mistakes online is BEFORE he/she clicks, posts or sends;
- Teach your child the value of privacy of personal information
- The "disinhibition" teenagers feel while communicating through technology (rather than in person) makes it very easy to do or say mean and hurtful things. Help them understand this by having conversations with them about why it is easier to be mean online than in person

## Resources Worth Your Time:
1. *Submit the Documentary*. Visit: https://vimeo.com/78631102 Video password: **Classroom** (Capital C)
http://www.submitthedocumentary.com/

2. CNN Special: On Being Thirteen (Aired October 5, 2015) *Inside the Secret World of Teens*
http://www.cnn.com/specials/us/being13