



ELEVEN- TO THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLDS

KIDS AT THIS AGE:

- ⊙ Can be highly influenced by what their friends are doing online and crave more independence
- ⊙ Tend to use the Internet to help with school work, to download music, e-mail others, play online games, and go to sites of interest
- ⊙ Enjoy communicating with friends by instant messaging (IM) and chat features, and text messaging on their cell phones
- ⊙ Lack the critical thinking skills to judge the accuracy of online information
- ⊙ Feel in control when it comes to technology
- ⊙ Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms
- ⊙ Are at a sensitive time in their sexual development—particularly boys—and may look for pornographic sites. Girls may try to imitate provocative media images and behaviors.
- ⊙ Are interested in building relationships (especially girls) with online acquaintances, and are susceptible to crushes on older teens or young adults
- ⊙ Are at the most vulnerable age range to become victims of sexual predators
- ⊙ May be bullied or may be bullying others online

GUIDELINES:

- ⊙ Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area and out of your children's bedrooms.
- ⊙ Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a complement—not a replacement—for parental supervision. Use parental controls on all Internet-enabled devices such as cell phones, gaming devices, iPods, and PDAs.
- ⊙ Talk with your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their offline activities.
- ⊙ Instruct your child to avoid face-to-face meetings with anyone they only know online. "Online friends" may not be who they claim to be.
- ⊙ Teach your kids never to give out personal information without your permission when participating in online activities (including e-mail, chat rooms or instant messaging, filling out registration forms and personal profiles, and entering online contests).
- ⊙ Insist on access and passwords to your kids' e-mail and instant messaging accounts to make sure that they're not talking to strangers. Limit instant messaging to a parent-approved buddy list.
- ⊙ Talk to your kids about ethical online behavior. They should not be using the Internet to spread gossip, bully, or make threats against others.
- ⊙ Disallow chat rooms.
- ⊙ Do periodic spot checks (like checking browser history files) to monitor your kids' online behaviors.
- ⊙ Limit time online.
- ⊙ Do not allow your children to have online profiles or pages on social networking sites that have a minimum age requirement such as MySpace (thirteen years old) and Facebook (thirteen years old). (Kids can lie about their ages and gain access to these sites.) Only allow your children to access YouTube with caution. Sites such as Imbee, ClubPenguin, and TweenLand are more appropriate for users under fourteen years of age. Follow the *Rules 'N Tools®* Parent's Guideline regarding social networking sites.
- ⊙ Your children should not post pictures or videos unless under close parental supervision.