

Cyberbullying Prevention

Questions Parents Should Ask Their Children About Technology

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It is important to talk with youth about what they are doing and seeing online. Most of the time, they are using technology safely and responsibly, but sometimes they run into trouble. As a parent, you want to establish an open line of communication so that they are comfortable turning to you in times of crisis, whether perceived or actual, and whether online or off.

Below we list several questions that you can use to get the proverbial ball rolling. Be strategic in how you approach your children with these queries: don't badger them with questions first thing in the morning or when they are stressed out about something at school. Find a time when they are open to your interest in these topics. Maybe it is during a longer car ride to an activity that they are really looking forward to. Or bring them up while you are eating ice cream on a hot summer afternoon. If you catch them at the right time, they will prove to be a treasure trove of information that can help you better understand what they are doing online.

GENERAL TECH USE

What is your favorite app? What do you do on it?

What apps or websites are your friends into these days?

Are you ever contacted by someone online that you don't know? If yes, what did they want? What did you do? How did you respond?

Have you ever received a text message from someone that made you upset? How did you respond?

How do you keep yourself safe online?

Do you get concerned that people will read what others have written about you online that is not true but think it's true?

Do you ever talk to anyone online that isn't in your school?

CYBERBULLYING

Do you ever argue or post hurtful updates on your Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or another social media site? Why?



Have you ever had to delete a post or comment on your page that was written by someone else?

Does cyberbullying happen a lot? Would you feel comfortable telling me if you were being cyberbullied?

Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously?



Have you ever had to contact a teacher or someone else at school because of a cyber-threat? If so, did they do something about it and did it help?

Does your school have a way to anonymously report bullying and cyberbullying?

Do you feel like your friends would be supportive of you if you told them you were being cyberbullied?

Do you ever get verbally attacked during online games?

Have you ever had to leave an online game because someone was bothering you online?

Have rumors ever started about you in school, based on something said online?



Did you find out who started the rumor? What did you do when you found out?



Have you ever blocked somebody online because you felt harassed? If so, did that make it stop?

SEXTING



Have you ever had anyone do or say anything sexually inappropriate to you online? How did you deal with it?

Has anyone ever asked any of your friends for an inappropriate photo or video? Has anyone ever asked you?

Do you know about the consequences that can result if you send inappropriate pictures (child pornography laws)?

How might sexting affect the reputation of those involved?

Is there a way to participate in sexting while still making sure that pictures or video sent in trust are never shared outside that relationship?

Has any adult at school ever talked with you about sexting?

What might participation in sexting say about your level of maturity, and your readiness to be in a healthy, mature romantic relationship?

Have you heard stories of other kids from your school (even those who may have graduated) or your community who have dealt with major fallout from sexting?

SAFE SOCIAL MEDIA USE



What social media apps do you use most frequently? How many friends or followers do you currently have on each? Are your accounts set to Public or Private?

What kind of people have you met on social media, outside of people you know at school? Do you feel like you can trust them? Do you ever worry that they might use your posts or content against you in *any* way?

Do you get a lot of friend or follow requests from strangers? If so, how are you handling that?

Do you use Twitter? What do you like or dislike about it? Who do you follow and who follows you?

Do you use Snapchat? Can you explain to me how it works? Do you think your sent and received snaps are really completely gone?

Do you know how to use the privacy settings on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and Twitter? What about on the games and gaming networks you use?

Do you have them set so that only those you accept as friends can see what you post? Are you sure about this?

What kind of personal information are you posting or sharing online? Have you ever posted your full name? Age? School? Phone number? Current location?

Have you ever been tagged in a photo or video in a way that made you upset?

Do you know how to edit your privacy settings so that if somebody wants to tag you in a post or photo, you have to approve it?



Do you know how to untag yourself in pictures?

Do you feel like social media apps should be used to vent your frustrations? Do your friends vent on social media? Do people comment? What do they say?

What kind of videos are you watching on YouTube? Do you have your own channel? How often are you posting and what kind of reception are you getting from those who see your videos?

Have you ever reported inappropriate videos that you have seen on YouTube? Or any other site or app?

Does anyone else know your password or passcode for any site or social media app? What about for your laptop, or cell phone?

How do you feel about your level of FOMO (fear of missing out) right now? Do you feel like you can control it based on how much you use social media?

Do you ever feel like you're addicted to social media? Has that "addiction" ever messed with your emotions or brought you down or negatively affected other areas of your life?

What do you think you can do to maintain a healthy balance when it comes to social media use?