

Internet Safety for Kids & Families

Computer Security Issues

The openness of the social web makes it more important than ever for families to use reputable security technology. Cybercriminals are constantly changing their tactics to trick internet users into downloading malicious software which spies on or steals information from you.



Just visiting a website that has been hacked can infect your computer and put your personal information at risk. Kids and adults alike need to be prepared so they can avoid becoming a victim of cybercrime.

What you can do:

- **Use reputable computer security technology.** And keep it up to date. Always install, update, and maintain firewalls and intrusion detection software.
- **Use the latest web browsers and install security patches.**
- **If you use Microsoft Windows,** enable the "Auto Update" feature.
- **For email:**
 - Use an anti-spam product. Most reputable computer security software has this feature.
 - Be wary of unexpected or strange-looking emails. Never open attachments or click on links from these emails.
 - **If you know the sender...**
 - Be alert when receiving emails that request account details.
 - Never email financial info to anyone.
- **For web surfing:**
 - Use a website reputation service. This type of service can flag sites that might be harmful for you to visit before you visit them.
 - Beware of websites that require software installation. Always read license agreements carefully and cancel the installation process if other programs are going to be installed in addition to the one you want.
 - Do not provide personal information to unsolicited requests for information. Only provide personal info on sites that display a lock icon at the bottom of your browser.

What you can do:

- **Be cautious.** Use sites and services that have privacy settings. Do not share personal information.
- **Be respectful.** Treat people the way you'd want to be treated. You could increase the chances of making yourself the target of cyberbullying by saying mean or disrespectful things about others.
- **Do not retaliate.** If someone says or does something online that makes you uncomfortable, it is best to ignore them or block them altogether. Retaliation can encourage the bully to continue.
- **Report bad behaviors.** If someone is harassing you (online or through your mobile phone), tell someone you trust. Report any bullying to the service provider of the email, phone, instant messaging, social networking or other online service that is being used by the bully. If the comments or content are illegal or break their terms of service, they can sometimes remove the disparaging content from the Internet. If the behavior is extreme enough, they may also provide appropriate account information and content to law enforcement in compliance with legal processes.
- **Save the evidence.** If the behavior continues and becomes increasingly extreme, work with your parents or another adult to save the offending messages, pictures or copies of online conversations. More serious forms of cyberbullying should be reported to the police.
- **Don't participate.** Even if you aren't the bully, do not be a participant by simply watching someone else bully another classmate or peer. Stand up for the victim and report it to your parents, teachers, or other adult you trust who may be able to do something about it.