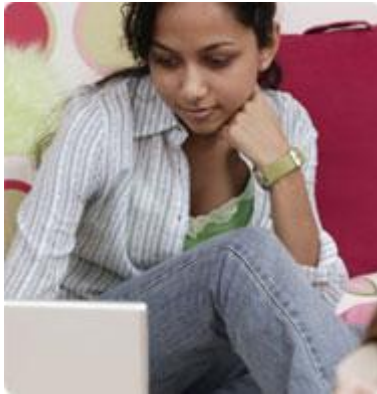


# Internet Safety for Kids & Families

## Unwanted Contact – Cyberbullying & Online Predators



The social nature of the Internet connects people who know each other and offers a way for people to make new friends. Social networking sites, IM, texting, chat rooms, and blogs can connect us to others who may have both good and bad intentions.

Behaviors such as **online grooming** (the practice used by a sexual predator to convince an underage person to have relations with them offline) and **cyberbullying** (online harassment of others) are some examples of unwanted online contact that people should understand and try to prevent.

### 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.

