



Family Online Rules

– tip sheet

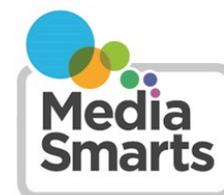
MediaSmarts' research has shown that kids with household rules about Internet use are less likely to do things like post their contact information, visit gambling sites, seek out online pornography and talk to strangers online. Having a family agreement or set of rules for using the Internet is also a great way for parents and kids to work together on how to be safe, wise and responsible online.

With younger children, it makes sense for you to set the rules and explain them. As kids get older and explore more of the online world, you can discuss new rules together.

The most important rule is that if anything ever happens online that makes your children scared, worried or uncomfortable, they should come to you or to another adult they trust. Make sure they know that you're on their side: a lot of kids are reluctant to tell their parents when things go wrong because they're afraid of losing their Internet access or their digital devices.

For more specific rules, here are some ideas to help you get started:

- I will always get my parents' permission before giving out any personal information online. This includes my name, gender, telephone number, home or email address, location of my school, my parents' work addresses, email addresses or telephone numbers, their credit card number information and pictures of me or my family.
- I will not visit any websites that I think my parents would not approve of.
- I won't share my passwords with anyone (except my parents or a trusted adult) - not even my best friend.



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- I will NOT arrange to meet a friend I have made on the Internet unless a parent or an adult that I trust goes with me.
- I will ask an adult first before downloading anything, opening attachments or following any links that I don't know are safe.
- I will always remember that there are other people on the other side of the screen whose feelings can be hurt by what I say and do.
- I will not be mean or cruel to anyone online, even if someone else is mean to me first.
- If someone is ever mean to me online, I will remember that it's not my fault.
- If I see someone else being mean or cruel to someone online, I will do what I can to help the person who is being targeted.
- If I ever get mad while I'm online, I will let myself cool down before I say or do anything.
- I will not share anything online that belongs to someone else without their permission.
- I will always think about how other people might feel before I share something online. I will never share anything that might embarrass someone or hurt their feelings.
- I will give other people credit when I use their ideas or copy parts of their documents from the Internet in my homework or other projects.
- I will not disable any filtering software my parents have put on the computer.
- I will not buy things online unless I have my parents' permission.

