

## Internet Safety Tools for Parents

### What can parents of 10- to 11-year-old children do to help keep them safer?

#### Technology

- Spend time with your child and know what s/he is doing online and offline.
- Use parental controls on your computer.
- Know your child's passwords and screen names.
- Online profiles should be set up with adult supervision. Ensure your child's screen names and nicknames are nondescript and do not reveal her/his true interests, age, gender or contain pictures.
- Reinforce household guidelines for Internet use and set limits on the amount of time your child spends online.
- Ensure that your child is not communicating in chat rooms as they are typically unregulated.
- Provide adult supervision for Instant Messaging (i.e. MSN, AIM, Yahoo!, etc.), emailing, online games and their chat components. Know and check regularly all of your child's contacts on her/his friend/buddy lists.
- Webcams should only be used with direct parental supervision and pictures should only be accepted and sent with parental permission.

### Important discussions to have

#### Behaviour online

- Reinforce that the Internet is a public place just like the store, the neighbourhood, the playground or going to someone's house and set the expectation that you will monitor your child online to increase her/his safety.
- Help your child find safe ways for privacy (e.g. an offline diary, notebook, talking to friends face-to-face, etc.).
- Talk to your child about the importance of valuing their own and other's personal information. Teach your child to respect her/his friends' personal information including pictures. A friend's personal information should not be shared without the friend's permission.
- Discuss how easily information shared with someone can be misused.



## Internet Safety Tools for Parents (cont'd)

- Explain to your child that once a picture is sent online s/he loses control of what is done with it. The picture may never be completely removed from the Internet. Explain that information can be misused by some people so it needs to be protected.
- Teach your child to take a leadership role and not forward inappropriate messages about others.

### Contact online

- Explain to your child that there is no need or urgency to respond to messages that someone sends her/him. Teach your child not to respond to messages that make her/him feel uncomfortable, scared or unsure and to tell a safe adult if they do receive such a message.
- Review with your child the difference between a *KEEP* and a *SPEAK Secret*. A *KEEP Secret* is harmless and will eventually come out, like a birthday present; a *SPEAK Secret* is one that children are told never to tell, like being threatened by someone or a secret about touching or picture-taking. Tell your child that *SPEAK Secrets* need to be told to a safe adult.
- Discuss the concept of anonymity on the Internet with your child — people can pretend to be anyone.
- Talk about friendship with your child: what it is and isn't. Explain that new friendships started online need to be adult-supervised and that children should never meet someone in person they first met online without an accompanying parent.

### Content

- Children have access to vast amounts of information online. This offers incredible opportunities, but it also offers exposure to explicit and harmful content. Encourage your child to talk to you if they come across something upsetting without having to fear getting into trouble.

