Tools for Safety on the Internet

- **Teach your children to never give personal information over the Internet**, such as name, address, telephone number, passwords, parents’ names, parents’ place of work, the name of any club or team he/she is involved in, name of his/her school.

- **Pay Attention to Online Photos: Know the type of photos your child is posting online.** We recommend encouraging your child not to post any photos online. But since they invariably will we suggest you have them ask themselves this question before they post: Is this something my parents, my school principal, or the police would give the okay to? What would a predator think if he saw the picture? Children use various forms of technology to post information and photos online, such as videos, camera phones and web cams.

- **Know your kids’ online activities and friends.** Regularly ask your kids about their online friends and activities. Role-play with your child the various dangerous scenarios they could encounter online. *Almost one in eight youth ages 8–18 discovered that someone they were communicating with online was an adult pretending to be much younger.* We recommend children only communicate online with people they know in the real world. Children should not be using chat rooms—the most common place for predators to find victims.

- **Instruct your child never to plan a face-to-face meeting.** *One-third of youth ages 8–18 have talked about meeting someone they have only met through the Internet.* Remind your child regularly to report any communications, requests for meetings and/or cyber bullying, or anything they see on line which makes them uncomfortable, fearful or confused. Recommend them for bringing these issues to your attention.

- **Supervise Computer Use: Keep your child’s computer in an open area of your home and be aware of other computers and other devices children may be using outside of the home.** Placing the computer in an area, such as the kitchen or family room, gives parents the ability to supervise a child’s online navigation. Pay attention to other computer and Internet-enabled mobile devices children are using. Start this habit young so children are use to having their laptops in the main area of home.

- **Keep the Lines of Communication Open: Use the Internet with your child.** Parents should be proactive about their children’s online activities. Spend time alongside your child and establish an atmosphere of trust. This provides an opportunity for parents to engage in dialogue about websites their children visit and programs they are using. Try to stay one step ahead . . . learn social networking before your children are ready to participate. Parents should be open to learning about technology so they can keep up with their children. Understanding how children use the Internet will give parents a better idea of the risks they may face.

- **Limit and monitor the amount of time your child spends on the Internet,** and at what times of day. Excessive time online, especially at night, may indicate a problem. Remind your child that Internet use is not a right it is a privilege.

- **Establish online rules and an agreement with your child about Internet use at home and outside of the home** (i.e., at a friend’s house, at school, at the library, etc). See the KidSafe Internet Safety Contract.

- **Virtual Parenting: Set-up the family’s Internet service accounts.** Parents should take an active role in setting up Internet service accounts, including any online community services children may join. Parents should regularly monitor accounts to supervise online friends, chat areas and blogs. It is safest to block all chat rooms and limit instant messaging to a parent-approved buddy list. *Approximately 89% of sexual solicitations of youth were made in either chat rooms or through instant messaging.*