

PARENTS ENCOURAGED TO SURF ALONG FOR ONLINE SAFETY

INFORMATION BULLETIN 2011EDUC0007-000106 Feb. 7, 2011 Ministry of Education

VICTORIA Safer Internet use is all about parental involvement: setting guidelines, being involved and guiding your child in the online world the same way you do in their everyday lives. In recognition of International Safer Internet Day, Feb. 8, 2011, parents are encouraged to make sure they are fully involved in their children's Internet use.

General recommendations

- Educate yourself about the Internet. It's important to be knowledgeable about the Internet, because even if you don't have a computer at home, your child can access it at school, at a friend's house, or at your public library.
- Create a family agreement for Internet use, including hours of use, which sites can be accessed and which ones shouldn't be.
- Place your computer in a central, open location, like the living room, so Internet use can be supervised.

Guiding your child online

- Look at the sites your child/teen visits. Be involved in their online social networks.
- Look into software or online services that filter out offensive material. Check with your Internet service provider for any blocking features they might offer.
- Consider installing a children's search engine, there are many available.
- Create a special folder of "bookmarks" or "favourites" for your child on your family's computer.

Preserving your family's privacy

- If you have a website, avoid putting your children's pictures on it.
- Teach your children never to give out identifying information about any family member. This includes names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, passwords or credit card numbers.
- Encourage your child to tell you if anyone is asking for personal information.
- Teach your child that talking to a stranger on the Internet is no different than talking to a stranger on the street.

Minimizing possible risks

- Talk to your children about potential online dangers such as giving out personal information to strangers. Chat room acquaintances are strangers and your child should never arrange to meet them in the real world unless you give permission and/or know who they are.
- Better yet, if your children are young, steer them away from chat rooms. Older children should only participate in chat rooms you approve of.
- If your child starts receiving phone calls from strangers or places calls to people you don't know, get to the bottom of it immediately.

- Tell your children that if someone harasses them online, says something inappropriate, or makes them feel uncomfortable in any way they should tell you, their teacher, or a trusted adult.
- Contact the police immediately if your child receives child pornography, has been sexually solicited or has received sexually explicit images from an adult.

In 2010, Safer Internet Day was celebrated through more than 500 events in 65 countries all over the world. Safer Internet tips are available in 14 different languages at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resources.htm.