FACEBOOK: General Information for Parents

How should I help my child use this site wisely?

The best thing to do is to talk to your children and teach them about Internet safety. Remind them to:
Never share their password with anyone
Understand their privacy settings
Report people that violate our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities
Block anyone that might be sending unwanted content

What other resources are available regarding internet safety?
Here are some websites with valuable information:
A Thin Line
Beatbullying.org
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
Childnet-int.org
Commonsense.org
ConnectSafety.org
Cyber bullying Research Centre
FOSI.org
NCMEC.org
NetSmartz.org
On guar dOnline.gov
TRUSTe.org
UK Council for Child Internet Safety
WebWiseKids.org
WiredSafety
STOP cyberbullying
Teenangels
WiredKids

What if my child sees inappropriate content or offensive material on the site?
Facebook takes the safety of its users very seriously and makes a significant effort to take down any objectionable material that may be posted on the site. We encourage users to report offensive profiles, messages, groups, events, shares, notes and photos. Reported items are then reviewed by Facebook administrators and removed if deemed in violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. Users also have the option of "blocking" other users, which will ensure that they are unable to find them in a search, view their profile or send them a message.

What happens when I report someone?

All abuse reports on Facebook are confidential. The user that you are reporting will not know that you have reported them. After the report is submitted, Facebook investigates the issue and makes a determination as to whether or not the content should remain on the site based on our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. In certain situations, the circumstances require more severe action. For instance, users who repeatedly violate our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities can be permanently banned from the site.

Please be aware that not all reported content will be removed. A Facebook administrator looks into each report thoroughly in order to decide the appropriate
course of action. If no violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities has occurred, then no action will be taken.

**What is the Facebook Safety Advisory Board, and what does this board do?**
The Facebook global Safety Advisory Board is comprised of five leading Internet safety organizations from North America and Europe. These organizations serve in a consultative capacity to Facebook on issues related to online safety. Read more about the organizations here:

**Childnet International**
Childnet International is a UK-based charity working domestically and internationally to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children and young people, alongside enabling them to use interactive technologies safely and responsibly. Childnet has developed a number of resources designed to help young people and parents assess and manage the risks that they may encounter online: http://www.childnet.com

**Common Sense Media**
Common Sense Media is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive in a world of media and technology: http://www.commonsense.org

**Connect Safely**
ConnectSafely.org is the leading interactive resource on the Web for parents, teens, educators – everyone – engaged and interested in youth safety on the fixed and mobile social Web: http://www.connectsafely.org

**The Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI)**
The Family Online Safety Institute works to make the online world safer for kids and their families by identifying and promoting best practice, tools and methods in the field of online safety, that also respect free expression: http://fosi.org

**WiredSafety**
WiredSafety is the largest online safety, education, and help group program in the world and provides help, information and education to Internet and mobile device users of all ages, especially on cyberbullying matters: http://www.wiredsafety.org and http://stopcyberbullying.org/

**Helping Your Teen Respond to Unwanted Contact**

**How can my teen report abuse?**
The best way to flag abusive content on the site is to use the "Report" links that appear near the content itself. When a report is submitted, we will review it and take any action warranted by our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. To submit a report, please take the steps listed below:

**Report a profile:** Go to the profile and click the "Report/Block this Person" link that appears in the left column below the profile photo.

**Report a photo:** Go to the specific photo and click the "Report This Photo" link that appears below the photo.

**Report an Inbox message:** View the message and click the "Report Message" link that appears below the sender’s name. Note that you can only report messages from non-friends.

**Report a group or event:** Go to its main page and click the "Report" link that appears below the group or event photo.
**Report a Page:** View the Page and click the "Report Page" link that appears in the left column below the Page photo.

We also recommend that you consider blocking the user involved in the report. People you block won't be able to find you in searches, view your profile, or contact you with pokes, Wall posts, or personal messages. You can block people by adding their names to your block list at the bottom of the Privacy Settings page, or by checking "Block this person" when you report them. These people will not be notified when you block them, and any existing ties you have with them will be removed.

**What should I do if my teen is being cyberbullied?**
We want Facebook to remain an environment where people can connect and share comfortably. Cyberbullying is defined as the use of any new technology to harass or intimidate someone, and there are steps you can take to prevent this kind of behaviour if it occurs.

**Accept Friend Requests Safely**
In order to prevent harassment from strangers, tell your teen to only accept friend requests from people they know in real life. Also, show your teen how to report any messages or profiles that look suspicious. Facebook is based on a real-name culture, and fake profiles are disabled when they're reported to us. Please also keep in mind that only confirmed friends can post to your teen's Wall or contact your teen via Facebook Chat, so if you are worried that someone will make inappropriate posts or send offensive messages, you can advise your teen to ignore that person's friend request.

**Use the "Block" Feature to Stop Abusive Behaviour**
Your teen can use the block feature to prevent all interactions with someone on Facebook. If your teen receives inappropriate or abusive communication, they can block the person responsible. To do this, show your teen how to enter the name or email address of the user he or she wants to block in the "Person" or "Email" fields at the bottom of the page and click "Block." Your teen can visit this page at any time by navigating to the "Privacy Settings" option in the Account drop-down menu available from the top of every page.

**Report Abusive Behaviour Directly to Facebook**
The most efficient way for your teen to report abuse is to do it in the same place it occurs on Facebook. For example, if your teen receives a harassing Inbox message, they can report the message by clicking on the "Report" link next to the sender's name on the message. If your teen receives a harassing message from a person who is one of their Facebook friends, they should remove the person as a friend and report the message. Reporting the message as harassment will automatically add this person to your teen's Block List. There is also a "Report/Block person" link available from the bottom of the abusive user's profile. If you learn that someone is continuing to make abusive comments about your teen even after they've been blocked, you or a friend can report that person on your teen's behalf. Reports are confidential and the individual being reported does not know that they have been reported. After a report is submitted, we will investigate the issue and make a determination as to whether or not the content should remain on the site based on our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. A Facebook administrator looks into each report thoroughly before
taking action. Please note that our team makes it a priority to respond to reports of harassing messages on the site.

**Restrict Privacy Settings**

To restrict the amount of information that potential bullies may have access to, you can help your teen customize his or her privacy settings so that certain people can't access information like the Wall, photos, or profile. Your teen can also change their privacy settings if they are uncomfortable being found in searches on the site. Privacy on Facebook is controlled primarily from the Privacy Settings page. This page is always available by navigating to the "Privacy Settings" option in the Account dropdown menu available from the top of every page. Please note that minors do not have public search listings created for them, so they do not appear in outside search engines until they have turned 18.

**Respond to Abusers in the Right Way**

Cyberbullies often seek a reaction from the people they harass. When they fail to get one, they often give up gradually. Rather than responding to a bully via Inbox, a Wall post, or Facebook Chat, your teen can use the "Block" or "Report" functions to resolve the issue safely. Remember, only confirmed friends can post to your teen's Wall or send your teen a message via Facebook Chat. If your teen is receiving posts and Chat messages that they don't like, you can help them remove the sender from their friend list. Please note that you should also contact the authorities if you ever feel threatened by something you see on the site.

**Someone is abusing or harassing my teen in an application**

Because this application was not built by Facebook and is operated by an outside developer with its own technical resources, your teen will need to contact the developer who created the application. Your teen can report this to the developer by going to the application’s Profile page and clicking "Contact Developer" towards the bottom of the left column, or by clicking "Contact" at the bottom of any canvas page within the application.

Facebook is not responsible for the support provided by this developer. However, Facebook works to ensure that all outside developers are following our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. If you or your teen find that the developer is unresponsive to your inquiry, please report the application for abuse by going to the application’s About page and clicking "Report Application" towards the bottom of the left column, or by clicking "Report" at the bottom of any canvas page within the application.

To prevent further harassment, we also recommend that your teen block the application as well as the user. Blocking an application will prevent your teen from receiving invites to add it and will disable the application from using your teen's information. This means that friends will no longer be able to communicate with your teen using this application. It will also prevent the application from publishing stories in your teen's News Feed.

Your teen can block a third party application from the application’s Profile page, or by searching for the application in the Application Dashboard or Search. On the Profile page your teen will have the option to "Block this Application" towards the
To block a user, your teen can click on "Account" in the upper right corner of any Facebook page and select the "Privacy Settings" option. Once your teen is on the Privacy Settings page, he or she can then click on the "Block List" option. Blocking allows your teen to prevent all interactions with someone on Facebook. The person who is blocked won't be able to find your teen in searches, view your teen's profile, or contact your teen on the site, and will not be notified that they have been blocked.

**What do I do if someone is harassing my teen on the site or through Inbox?**

You should advise your teen to block the person using the "Block List" option at the bottom of the Privacy Settings page. If this does not resolve the problem, you or your teen can report the user by clicking the "Report/Block this Person" link that appears at the bottom of the user's profile. Your teen can also report the sender of a message that he or she received using the report link located next to the message in the Inbox.

**What do I do if someone is attacking my teen in Facebook Chat?**

Please keep in mind that only your teen's confirmed friends can contact him or her via Facebook Chat. We recommend that your teen remove this user from his or her Friend List. If necessary, your teen may block the person using the "Block List" option available from the bottom of the Privacy Settings page.

**What if my teen's current or ex-boyfriend/girlfriend is controlling or monitoring what they do on Facebook?**

If your teen's current or ex-boyfriend/girlfriend is controlling or monitoring his or her activity on Facebook, this could be a sign of relationship abuse. If you think this might be happening to your teen, please call the National Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE to find out about resources in your community and get additional safety information.

Your teen may also want to consider restricting privacy on his or her Facebook account so that certain people can’t access information like the Wall, photos, or profile. Remember that computer usage can be monitored. If you're afraid that your teen's computer isn’t safe, visit http://stoprelationshipabuse.org/techsafe.html to learn more about computer safety.

**What do I do if someone is attacking my teen in a public forum?**

We suggest that your teen block the person by listing his or her name in on the "Block List" section of the Privacy Settings page. If this does not resolve the problem, you or your teen can report the individual by clicking the "Report/Block this Person" link that appears at the bottom of the user's profile. Reports are confidential and the user being reported does not know that they have been reported.

**My teen is receiving unwanted messages. What should I tell him or her to do?**

There are a few things your teen can do to resolve this: Your teen can anonymously report messages by clicking on the "Report Message" link under the name and picture of the sender when viewing a message. Facebook will review your complaint and will act to ensure all users comply with our Statement of
Rights and Responsibilities so that Facebook remains a trusted environment where people can interact safely.

Your teen can easily block any user on Facebook from seeing or contacting him or her by navigating to the "Block List" section of the Privacy Settings page. From there, direct your teen to enter the name or email address of the user he or she wants to block in the "Person" or "Email" fields at the bottom of the page and click "Block." Your teen can limit the people who can find him or her in searches from the "Search" section of the Privacy Settings page, which in turn limits who can send your teen a message. Your teen can also remove the option to send a message from his or her Facebook search listing from the "Contact Information" section of the Privacy Settings page.

My teen is receiving unwanted Wall postings. What should I tell him or her to do?
There are a couple of options available:
Your can remove any offensive Wall postings by clicking on the "Remove" link that appears on each posting.
If your teen would like to prevent the individual from leaving any more unwanted postings, you can advise your teen to remove the person as a friend from the Friends page. Only your teen's friends can post on his or her Wall.

Helping your Teen Respond to Objectionable Content
Where else can I report inappropriate or objectionable actions that have been taken against children?

Facebook takes the safety of its users very seriously and takes significant efforts to make sure that the interactions encountered on the site are done so in a safe manner. We strongly urge all users to report suspicious people and inappropriate content when they come across it on the site. You can notify Facebook of any inappropriate people or content by clicking on the "Report" link located throughout the site. Users under the age of 18 are also encouraged to talk to a parent or a responsible adult immediately if someone online says or does something to make them feel uncomfortable or threatened in any way.

If you are living in the United Kingdom, under 18, and believe that an adult is acting inappropriately towards you on Facebook, please submit an online report to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP):

(If you are a parent or other adult and concerned about a minor, you can also submit a report by clicking on the link above.)

What should my teen do if he or she finds an explicit, hateful or otherwise objectionable profile on Facebook?

We don't want any content like this on Facebook. You can help us out by advising your teen to notify us of any objectionable profiles. You or your teen can anonymously report offensive profile pictures and content by clicking on the "Report/Block this person" link located at the bottom left of the Profile page. The reporter will be asked to specify the offensive content. Facebook will review the complaint and will act to ensure all users comply with our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities so that Facebook remains a trusted environment where people can interact safely.
What should my teen do if he or she finds an explicit, hateful or otherwise objectionable group on Facebook?

You or your teen can anonymously report abusive group pictures and content by clicking on the "Report Group" link located under the group's picture. The reporter will be asked to specify the abusive content. Facebook will review the complaint and will act to ensure all users comply with our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities so that Facebook remains a trusted environment where people can interact safely. /help/?faq=16927

What should my teen do if he or she finds something in a explicit, hateful, or otherwise objectionable in a link posted on Facebook?

You or your teen can anonymously report offensive links by clicking on the "Report" link located under the material. You will be asked to specify the offensive content. Facebook will review your complaint and will act to ensure all users comply with our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities so that Facebook remains a trusted environment where people can interact safely.

What should my teen do if someone has posted an objectionable photo on Facebook?

You or your teen can anonymously report photos that violate our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities (e.g., pornography) by clicking on the "Report This Photo" link in the bottom right corner below the picture. Facebook reviews these complaints and takes down photos as necessary. It is not a violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to post a photo that is unflattering, so remind your teen not report a photo just because they may not like the way they look in it.

What should my teen do if he or she sees a hateful or otherwise objectionable note on Facebook?

You or your teen can anonymously report offensive note content and photos by clicking on the "Report This Note" link located below the text of each note. The Reporter will be asked to specify the offensive content. Facebook will review your complaint and will act to ensure all users comply with our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities so that Facebook remains a trusted environment where people can interact safely.

My teen saw an explicit, hateful or otherwise objectionable advertisement on Facebook. What should I tell him or her to do?

Please direct your teen to fill out this form to report the advertisement. We will use our best efforts to remove any ads that violate our Advertising Guidelines or Statement of Rights and Responsibilities.

Privacy for Minors
What kind of privacy settings do you offer?

Every Facebook user has the ability to customize his or her privacy settings. To edit the privacy settings for your own Facebook account, choose the "Privacy Settings"
Control who can see your information from the Basic Directory Information section.

Control who can see the content you share by selecting one of the four global privacy setting groupings (Everyone, Recommended, Friends of friends or Friends only) in the "Sharing on Facebook" section. If you'd like to further customize these settings, click the "Customize settings" link.

Control how your information is shared externally from the "Applications and Websites" section.

Block specific people or applications from interacting with you on Facebook from the "Block Lists" section.

How does privacy work for minors?

Minors (anyone under 18) who use Facebook have a slightly different experience with privacy than adults. Both adults and minors have some basic information (name, profile picture, gender and networks) appear when people navigate to their profile. This information may be accessed by applications that they and their friends use. Adults and minors both appear in search results on Facebook. However, minors do not have public search listings created for them.

The "Everyone" setting works differently for minors than it does for adults. When minors set information like photos or status updates to be visible to "Everyone," that information is actually only visible to their friends, friends of friends, and people in any verified school or work networks they have joined. The only exceptions are for "Search for me on Facebook" and "Send me friend requests", where if the minor has set those to Everyone, we respect the Everyone setting.

Age Restrictions on Facebook

How do I report a child under the age of 13?

Facebook requires individuals to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. In some jurisdictions, the age limit may be higher. Providing false information to create an account is always a violation of our Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. This includes accounts registered on the behalf of under 13 year old children by older parties.

If your underage child (child under the age of 13) has created an account on Facebook, you can show them how to delete their account by having them log into their account and following this link.

If you would like to report an account registered for an underage child to us, please do so here. We will promptly delete the account of any child under the age of 13 that is reported to us through this form.

How can I gain access to or delete my child's account if they are 13 years or older?

We appreciate your concern for your child's use of our website, but unfortunately we cannot give you access to the account or take any action on the account at your request. We are generally forbidden by privacy laws against giving unauthorized access to someone who is not an account holder. Please note that all users ages 13 and older are considered authorized account holders and are included in the scope of this
We encourage parents to exercise any discretion they can on their own computers and in overseeing their kids' internet use. If you are a parent, you might also consider using software tools on your own computer in order to do so. Please do a search for computer-based Internet control technology on your preferred search engine to discover options that you may wish to pursue.

Please also talk to your kids, educate them about internet safety, and ask them to use our extensive privacy settings.

**Advice from Common Sense Media**
Common Sense Media is one of the nation’s most trusted sources of media and technology guidance and education, helping kids and families thrive in the digital world and beyond. They are an independent non-profit and a member of the Facebook Safety Advisory Board. Check out their advice on the parenting issues related to kids and their Facebook accounts.

**Facebook and Homework: 5 Tips for Best Use**

A lot of teens use Facebook to make sure they have the right assignments and to help each other figure out answers to questions. As long as they’re not cheating or taking advantage of another kid’s work (as happens in the real world, too), then this type of collaboration may actually result in better understanding of the problems and the likelihood that they’ll turn in their work.

**No cheating.** The number-one rule: If it’s cheating in real life, it’s cheating online. Just because your teens can copy, cut, and paste faster than they can craft a sentence about Tolstoy, it doesn’t make it right. Cheating is cheating. Digital or otherwise.

**Give as much as you get.** Facebook makes collaborating on projects easy. But there are always kids who take advantage of working in group settings. Make sure that no one kid is being used for his or her seemingly endless supply of correct answers. If one kid seems to be doling out the answers to grateful recipients, your kid shouldn’t partake (the group will eventually be found out by teachers anyway).

**Know school policy.** Check with your child’s teachers or the school to make sure they approve of this type of collaboration. The practice is so common now that teachers may even encourage kids to work together to puzzle things out.

**Establish time limits for group work.** Kids get side tracked easily. A simple Spanish assignment can drift into other discussions. If you establish a time limit for collaboration, then your teens will focus better and get their work done more quickly (and probably with more focus)!

**Rein in the multitasking.** There are several studies on the effects that multitasking has on kids. According to some research, multitasking reduces memory retention and also it extends the time it takes to do an assignment. If your kids are staying up late because they’re doing homework, listening to music, IMing, and popping back and forth between episodes of The Family Guy, they may not be getting enough sleep. And studies show a direct correlation between the amount of sleep that kids get and their performance in school.

**Can I Use a Media Agreement to Build Trust with My Teens?**

**Common Sense media agreement for parents and teens**
Online life is a privilege and with it comes some expectations about how teens responsibly use the freedoms they get to create and communicate. One really important way to insure kids know what’s expected is to have a really clear
conversation about all the important issues raised in online life. Because so much of online life happens without parental scrutiny, we suggest using a media agreement like the one below to facilitate understanding and clarity. If parents know their teens know how to use the Internet and social networks responsibly, then they can operate with more trust and freedom. We suggest sitting down with your teens and going through this media agreement. Have a great talk. Amend what doesn’t work for your family. But definitely go through the exercise. You’ll be amazed how it helps build trust and open lines of communication.
Common Sense media agreement for parents and teens

- I will protect my reputation and privacy.
- I will set all my privacy settings on Facebook to what my parents and I agree is the right level of privacy.
- I will not give out my personal information (like my address) to someone I don’t know.
- I will not post or send sexy or scandalous photos.
- I will not post anything on my profile that I wouldn’t want my parents, teachers, college admissions officers, or future employers to see.
- I will demonstrate my maturity.
- I agree to only use Facebook and the Internet responsibly and not be hurtful to anyone.
- I agree not to use technology to cheat in games or in school.
- I agree not to post anything that would compromise another person’s privacy.
- I agree to flag and report content that is offensive or inappropriate.
- I will be mindful of how much media I consume and will balance it with other activities in my life.
- I will confide in an adult if anything potentially dangerous happens online.
- I will think first.
- I know that not everything I read or see is true, and I will think about whether a source or person is credible.
- I agree to think about and understand anything I download or any survey I fill out.
- I will earn my independence and my parents’ trust.
- I will help my parents understand why Facebook and online life is so important to me.
- I will show them how to use the tools that I like if they’re interested in learning.
- I will recognize that my safety and wellbeing is more important to them than anything else.

In exchange, my parents agree to:
- Be open-minded about the media that I love and recognize that it’s a big part of my life, even if they don’t always understand why.
- Let me make some mistakes and help me learn from them.
- Before saying "no," talk with me about what worries them and why.
- Respect my privacy and talk to me if they have concerns.
- Embrace my world: try to understand downloads, IM, online games, and Web sites that I like.

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SIGNED BY ME

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SIGNED BY MY PARENTS
Can I "Friend" My Teen?
"Friending" for Parents
Facebook. Our teens love it. It is also a great way for teens to stay in touch with their friends and showcase their interests (and have fun). But what do you do about "friending" your kids?

Common Sense Tips for "Friending" on Facebook

Start with your kids' age. If your kids are in middle school and are at least 13 years old (Facebook’s minimum age requirement), it may be a sound policy to know what they're posting, since kids that age don't necessarily understand that they're creating a digital footprint that could long outlast the passions of the moment.

Talk to your high school-aged teens about whether or not they're comfortable letting you friend them. Many will be. This is a case of "know your kid," and it comes down to trust. But establish rules: no drug talk, no nudity, no pictures of drinking, no hate speech, no bullying, and no posting party locations. Some of this is common sense but some actually is against Facebook’s policy and its Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and violations could get your teen's account disabled. Besides, they are just plain bad ideas in an age where much of what kids post may travel farther and last longer than teens can ever imagine.

Don't fill your kids' pages with your comments. As it is, simply having parents is mortifying enough at this age. Their friends don't need evidence of your existence (and you can always send them private messages).

Don't friend your kids' friends. See reasons above.

Remember: They can see what you post. If you're a friend, also be a role model. Keep your nose clean.

Choose your battles... If you don't want your kids to "unfriend" you, don't comment on every post or comment you see. Keep it general.

Remember, you're the parent. Even if you aren't your kids' Facebook "friend," your job is still to pass your values along to them and to help them learn how to be safe and responsible on or offline.

How Can I Understand My Teen’s Connected World?

Our Teens’ Connected Culture
For teens, connecting online or by text is a fact of life. Thanks to Facebook, connecting to someone now even has its own verb: "friending." A simple glance at your kids’ Facebook page will reveal connections to other kids who, once they are designated "friends," can keep up with each others thoughts and activities. So much of this is fabulous – pictures from camp, last minute homework assignment helpers, birthday greetings from people they forgot about. But we have to realize that freedom has its price – and in this case, it’s responsible use. It’s up to our teens to self-reflect before they self-reveal and ask themselves, ‘am I sure I want to post this thought/picture/movie/activity?’ Because once something is online in this connected culture, it can travel far and wide. Responsible use means that teens must understand the concept of privacy so that what they post and create won't come back to haunt them. Because much of digital communication can be anonymous, consequences can be separated from actions, which can lead to irresponsible or disrespectful behavior.
Much of the task of adolescence involves figuring out who you are. But in digital life, anything said or posted can live on indefinitely and create undesired reputations. The truth is that our teens’ technological abilities can eclipse their maturity and judgment. The difference between a great experience and an iffy one lies in the decisions they make. Those who really know how to use digital tools responsibly will be able to harness their awesome power.

Common Sense Says:

Teach teens the skills they need to use technology wisely and well. It’s hard to gate-keep in a world with no fences. Since parents cannot cover their eyes forever, they need to teach their kids how to see and how to behave responsibly.

Help them self-reflect before they self-reveal. This doesn't come naturally to kids -- and certainly not in a world where anyone can post a video and have thousands of people see it and comment on it.

Explain the essential facts of how the digital world works. They understand cut and paste. But wait until it happens to them!

Keep an open mind. We don’t see the world the way our kids do. We don’t help our kids when we judge their lives through the lens of a non-digital world. It’s important for us to understand that our kids will spend their lives in a connected world where everyone participates in communication and creation.

Don't be afraid. Parents can’t afford to be technophobic. Our kids adopt technologies faster than we do. This fact upsets the parent/child relationship. So get in the game. Have your kids show you how to do something if you don't know.

Share wisdom. Our teens may not understand the implications of their actions. But we do. We have to remember to extend our basic parenting wisdom to the digital world. We teach kids to use their words, play nicely with others, respect their teachers – now we have to extend that to a vast, invisible world.

Pass along your values. One of the most important jobs of parenting is instilling in our teens the values we cherish. As parents, we have to be able to translate our values into the digital world and help teens understand the implications of their actions.

Seek balance. It’s hard to know how much freedom to give our teens. We want them to explore, enjoy, communicate, and create. We also want to be sure they are protected or they know how to protect themselves. If our teens are going to thrive with digital media, we must balance the negative with the positive, privacy with protection. As teens grow, they need more independence and privacy. But parents have to be sure they know how to be safe and responsible before letting them loose. Our teens need to see both the possibilities and the perils so they can act responsibly and seize all that is wondrous and have it enrich their lives as people and citizens.

**How Can I Help Protect My Teen from Cyberbullying?**

Hurting someone with a simple click. A second at the keypad can cause long-lasting damage. As more and more kids discover new ways to share information, they have unfortunately found more and more ways to harm each other. Just as nasty comments in a playground can cause a lot of pain, cyberbullying can really hurt our kids.
Why it matters.
Nothing crushes teens’ self-confidence faster than humiliation. And just imagine a public humiliation sent instantly to everyone they know. Sadly, hurtful information posted on the Internet is extremely difficult to prevent or remove, and millions of people can see it. Most cyberbullying happens when adults aren’t around, so parents and teachers often see only the depression or anxiety that results from being hurt or bullied. This emotional damage can last a lifetime.

Common Sense Says:

Be very clear about establishing a code of conduct. Tell your teens that if they wouldn’t say something to someone’s face, they shouldn’t text it, IM it, or post it.

Ask your teens if they know someone who has been cyberbullied. Sometimes they will open up about others’ pain before admitting their own.

Tell your teens what to do if they’re harassed. They shouldn’t respond or retaliate. If physical threats are involved they should tell you or an adult they trust. They shouldn’t delete the messages because in persistent cases, the content should be reported to a cell or Internet Service Provider.

If your teen is doing the bullying, establish strict consequences and stick to them. That goes for mean or sexual comments about teachers, friends, and relatives.

Help kids understand the tools that they can use to address bullying. On Facebook, teens can report or block people that are harassing them by clicking on the "Report/Block this Person" link at the bottom of the bully’s Facebook profile.

Don’t start what you don’t want to finish. Game chat can get ugly fast. Make sure your teens are respectful because hurtful retaliation happens all the time.

Tell kids to think before they reveal. At this age, teens experiment with all sorts of activities, many of which should not be made public. Remind them that anything they post can be misused by someone else.

Remind your teens that you love them – no matter what -- and that it’s more important to you that they feel safe than they worry about what you might see on their pages. If someone is bullying them, they can always come to you for help. No matter what the issue is.

How Do I Help My Teen Use the Internet Wisely?
Common Sense Rules of the Road for Parents

Good Internet life begins at home. The fact is that your teens may know more about Facebook than you do, but parents still are the most important influence in our teens’ lives (even if they seem to be ignoring you…they’re listening). The digital life is a two way street – so if you want kids who use the Internet well, it’s important for parents to walk the walk – not just talk the talk.
Model good behavior. If you're on your phones at dinner or during family events, why should your kids listen to you when you tell them to turn their phones off?
Pay attention. We have to know where our kids are going online -- and what they're doing there.
Impart your values. Right and wrong extends to all areas of life, whether it's online or through a mobile device. Cheating, lying, being cruel — they're all non-starters, no matter where you are. Establish limits. There's really a right time and place for everything. Set guidelines for when it's acceptable to use the phone, download videos and surf the web. Encourage balance. The Internet opens doors to new worlds. Encourage your kids to explore their own offline world as well, particularly when there is no cell phone or Internet service available. Make kids accountable. Let your kids know that having access to technology is a privilege. Let's make sure they earn it. Explain what's at stake. Let them know that what might seem acceptable today can be embarrassing tomorrow. Do your homework. Get familiar with the websites and services your kids use and the type of content they're downloading. Armed with knowledge, you can find ways to use technology to say "yes" more often. Don't be techno-phobic. Don't be afraid of technology. Learn to text, send a mobile photo, set up a Facebook profile, upload a video. Or have your kids show you how. It's impossible to guide what you don't understand. Not only that, but think of all the anxiety you can avoid by knowing how things work. Lighten up, embrace their world and enjoy the possibilities together. No parents want a digital divide in their relationships with their kids. It's up to you to join the fun and help your kids seize the potential.

How Can I Help Keep My Teens Safe Online?

10 Internet Safety Tips for Teens
Make sure they really understand the basics of safety and privacy. They need to keep their contact information and location private or protected by privacy controls. Although default privacy settings are more restrictive for minors on Facebook, teens still need to set their privacy settings so only their friends can see their stuff. They should never send pictures to strangers. Passwords are private (except to parents). People aren’t necessarily who they say they are in cyberspace. If they meet someone, it better be in a public place, with a friend. Even the best privacy controls won’t stop a friend from forwarding something a teen sent a friend "in private." Remember that anyone who can see a post can also copy it, alter it, and forward it. It’s up to your teens to be responsible for what they put out to the world. Because in this vast, invisible world of connections, anything can potentially be seen by or forwarded to unintended people like teachers, college admissions officers, or potential employers. Have an agreement about what’s okay to post. Teen years are full of self-expression and rebellion. Just make sure that your kids know your rules about suggestive material, alcohol, and drug references. Help your teen be a good digital citizen. Online cheating is still cheating. And flagging inappropriate content isn’t ratting – it’s keeping the Web a place where people want to hang out and where they can feel safe. The Golden Rule applies online. If they wouldn’t do it in real life, they shouldn’t do it online. No humiliating or cruel posts, no hate speech or groups, no compromising pictures they wouldn’t want the world to see. Besides, sites have Terms of Service and these actions are violations that will result in your teen’s account being removed. Agree on downloads. What apps are okay? Which video sites? What games?
Encourage critical thinking. They should ask "who posted this? and why?" This will help them find trustworthy information, and it will also help avoid online scams that deliver spyware and viruses directly to your home.

Stay in safe neighbourhoods. Just as your teens learn not to walk down dark alleys alone at night, they need to know how to avoid negative places online. And if they do venture there, remind teens that unpleasant or suspicious communications should get trashed immediately.

Parents need to view their own habits carefully. You are the ultimate role models. Keep channels of communication open. Better safe than sorry. Make sure kids are comfortable telling you if anything menacing or cruel happens – no matter what site they were on.