



Digital Parenting: Keeping Kids Safe

Digital Safety Parent Academy

November 13, 2014

Parent Supplemental Handout

Common Tools Students are Currently Using

- **Club Penguin**

Why is it Popular?

This is a made up world where kids can create their own avatar penguin, buy clothes to make them unique and create a home environment. Kids not only create, but can socialize with other penguin friends and play.

What parents need to know

- Anyone can create an avatar regardless of age and can pretend to be someone they are not
- Leads to endless fun which means kids can stay online for long periods of time

- **MineCraft**

Why is it Popular?

An open-ended “sandbox” game where kids can construct their own worlds and play in elaborate worlds. There are two types of play environments – Game play and stand-alone. Game play can be single player or multiplayer. The free version is not multiplayer.

What parents need to know

- Kids get lost in the game so very easy to stay online for long periods of time
- Multiplayer opens the game play up to anyone

- **Vine**

Why is it Popular?

Site is a social media app where anyone can upload videos. Videos run the gamut from stop-motion clips of puzzles doing and undoing themselves to six-second skits showing how a teen wakes up on school days vs a day during the summer. Teens usually use Vine to create and share silly videos of themselves and/or their friends and family.

What parents need to know

- It's full of inappropriate videos. In a random search you can find a clip full of full-frontal male nudity, a woman in a fishnet shirt and nothing else, people using drugs, etc... However, there are also a lot of funny, clever expression on Vine, but much is inappropriate for younger kids.
- There are significant privacy concerns. The videos you post, the accounts you follow, and the comments you make on videos are all public by default. You can adjust settings, but many kids do not.
- Parents can be star performers (without knowing). If your teens film you being goofy or silly, you may want to talk about whether they have plans to share it.

- **Instagram**

Why is it Popular?

This site lets users snap, edit, and share photos along with 15-second videos. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos.

What parents need to know

- Teens are on the lookout for “likes” similar to Facebook concept. Kids/Teens may measure the “success” of their photos – even self-worth – by the number of likes or comments they receive.
- Public photos are the default. Again there are privacy settings but they need to be adjusted. Hashtags and location info can make photos even more visible to communities beyond the teen’s followers.
- Private messaging is an option. So kids could share inappropriate messages with groups of people (up to 15)

- **Snapchat**

Why is it Popular?

This site is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they “disappear”. Kids love to share fun, light moments without risk of having them public.

What parents need to know

- It’s a myth that the pics go away forever. Data is data. There is a digital footprint. Snapchats can be recovered.
- It can make sexting seem OK.

- **Ask.fm**

Why is it Popular?

Social site where kids asks question and answers are posted by other users. Interactions are meant to be friendly like “what’s your favorite food” or “who are your crushes”. Answers can be anonymous.

What parents need to know

- Bullying is a major concern. Anonymous answers are optional.
- There is iffy content – mean comments and some creepy sexual posts...which is part of the appeal for certain teens.
- Q&A’s can appear on Facebook. It allows for syncing.

- **Kik Messenger**

Why is it Popular?

Standard texting that kids use for social networking. Its fast and has no message limit, character limits, or fees if you just use basic features. Kids like it because they can communicate with other kids who don’t have mobile devices. It is decidedly a “more fun” way to SMS text.

What parents need to know

- Little bit of stranger danger since it allows users to communicate with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with.
- It uses real names and not tag names.

- **Omegle**

Why is it Popular?

Chat site (and app) that puts two strangers together in their choice of a text chat or video chat room. Being anonymous is very attractive to teens, and Omegle provides a no-fuss opportunity to make connections. It's "interest boxes" also let users filter potential chat partners by shared interests.

What parents need to know

- Users get paired up with strangers.
- Language is a big issue...as well as sexting.

Way to Protect Machine:

- Malware & Viruses
 - Microsoft Security Essentials
 - AVG (Free version)
 - Malware Bytes
- Router Controls
 - Block certain websites
 - Block access by IP Address
 - Block access by time of day

Ways to Protect our Children & Monitor

- Parental Control Software
 - Ways to filter websites, online searching, gaming, file transfer and application blocking
 - Net Nanny - \$28..99; by far best on the market
 - Web Watcher - \$99.99
- Know your Chat Room Lingo (see additional handout & visit web link: https://www.herts.police.uk/pdf/chatright_chat_definitions.pdf)
- Other ways to take control
 - **Talk with your kids – most important**
 - Educate yourself
 - Use parental controls
 - Set ground rules & apply sanctions
 - Be a friend and follow on social media....do NOT stalk them
 - Be a good, digital role model yourself.

Signs your Child may be At-Risk

- Your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night
- You find inappropriate material on child's technology device
- Your child turns off the display when you enter the room
- Your child receives strange phone calls, receives gifts, mail or packages from unknown people
- Your child becomes withdrawn