

CYBER SAFETY

A guide for parents



The 24/7 availability of the internet and the easy access to social media makes parenting tough. All adults need to be aware of the dangers posed by the various apps because the challenge of keeping kids safe from hurtful information and potential predators never ends. This brochure introduces the most common apps used by kids and teaches parents and caregivers how they can keep their children safer.



KNOW THE FACTS



STAY UP-TO-DATE



WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

KNOW THE FACTS



of teenagers have access to a smart phone, iPad, or other smart device.

WHAT IS HIDING ON YOUR CHILD'S PHONE?

There are apps specifically used to hide content – like explicit pictures, videos, conversations and more. If you notice any of the following apps on your child's phone and they are password protected so you can't open the app, talk with your child and find out why they are using the app.

- Best Secret Folder
- Gallery Lock
- Keepsafe
- Private Photo Vault
- Secret Calculator
- Secret Photo Album
- Vaulty



4-8 Graders have connected or chatted online with a stranger.



increase in reports of online enticement received in 2020 (37,800+) compared to 2019 (19,100+).



Young Kids said that they have been a victim of online bullying.

What you need to know

Researchers have found a rise in cyberbullying, sexting, online enticement reports and fraud. These four areas have the most concern for parents when it comes to their children being active online. Here are a few safety tips to discuss with your kids.

Cyberbullying

- Avoid gossip.
- Don't encourage cyberbullies.
- Bystanders are guilty, too.

Avoid Online Predators

- Recognize the difference between cute and creepy.
- Trust your gut.
- Report anything that makes you and your friends feel bad.

Sharing Too Much

- Read your profile and delete any private information.
- Delete contacts that are not your friends or positive influences.
- Use privacy settings.
- Stop. Think. Put your clothes back on.

STAY UP-TO-DATE



3.8 billion people use social media on a daily basis

Below are the dangerous dozen, the 12 apps most often used by kids and teens, and a short description of how they can be abused.

ask.fm

This app lets users ask any questions they want, either anonymously or identifying themselves by name. Some people use the app's anonymity to bully other users, post offensive comments, and to ask personal and vulgar questions.

Confide

This app is a secret messaging tool, which makes it difficult for parents to know what their child is talking about and with whom.

Discord

This is a gaming app that lets users talk and chat with others, including strangers.

Facebook

Although fewer kids are using Facebook, this app is still a hotbed for predators, bullying and identity theft. Facebook is also used for profile impersonations.

flickr

Similar to Instagram and VSCO, this app is a favorite of online predators and can be used to bully others.

Instagram

One of the most widely used photo-sharing apps, Instagram lets users capture photos and share them with followers — who are often complete strangers. It is one of the most-used platforms for cyberbullying and online predators; and because of this app's popularity, hackers frequently use it to look for sensitive photos and other personal information.

Reddit

Similar to Twitter, this app is used to disseminate false information and can be used for cyberbullying and spreading false rumors.

Snapchat

Because the short videos and photos that are posted disappear after being viewed, this app is used to send nude and otherwise compromising images. Unfortunately, users can take screenshots of images before they disappear, thereby posing the risk of dissemination.

TikTok

Although 13 is the minimum age requirement for users, anyone can use TIKTOK because ages are not verified. It is common for people to post videos with inappropriate language and messages for younger children. And all TIKTOK accounts are public which means anyone can view the videos a child posts and therefore connect with them — including predators.

tumblr

Used for social networking and blogging, kids access this public app to create and share text, photos, audio and videos. Content posted to TUMBLR is easily accessible and can be too raunchy, violent or even pornographic for kids.

Twitter

This app is often used to disseminate false information and is used for cyberbullying and spreading rumors.

VSCO

This photography app provides a variety of tools to upload, take, and edit photos that can then be shared on individual profiles. As with Instagram, online predators use this app to identify potential victims.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO



1

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS



The following behaviors could indicate that a child is involved in a negative online interaction:

- Avoids using smart phone or the computer
- Appears stressed when reading emails and other messages
- Is reluctant to attend school or social gatherings
- Stops doing homework/grades decline
- Withdraws from family and friends/lack of engagement
- Exhibits signs of low self-esteem, including sullenness, depression and/or fear
- Eating and sleep habits change

2

TALK ABOUT IT



It is important to have open dialogue with kids. Normalize difficult conversations and ask the tough questions:

- Has anyone ever tried to talk with you online about inappropriate or sexual things? If yes, how did you respond? Did you know the person?
- Do you trust all your online friends? Are there any you should unfriend or block?
- Can you show me which apps and sites you use?
- What do you think would happen if you shared or forwarded a nude picture?
- Do you ever talk online with people you do not know? What do you talk about?

3

REINFORCE CORRECT BEHAVIORS



Reinforce privacy and data protections, as well as remind children you are there to help keep them safe:

- Emphasize that once an image or message is posted and shared, it can be around forever. NOTHING is guaranteed private or temporary online.
- When you see something online that is meant to hurt someone, do not like or share it. Think about how you would feel if a false or negative message was posted about you.
- Check your followers and friends lists regularly to see who has access to your account.
- Remove anyone you do not know or trust, and only allow people you know into your online circle of friends.
- Block or unfriend anyone who bothers you.

4

USE RESOURCES



Use these helpful resources to discover more ways to keep your children safe:

- In Michigan, if you suspect a child is a victim of sexual or physical abuse or is being neglected, call the Department of Health and Human Services at **855-444-3911** or contact your local law enforcement agency. If it is an emergency, **call 911**.
- Call **877-MI-CYBER**, the Michigan Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.
- If children suspect potential harm or criminal activities directed at students, school employees and schools they can make a confidential report by calling **855-565-2729**; sending a text message to **652729 (OK2SAY)** or emailing **OK2SAY@mi.gov**.
- Questions about the process of reporting child abuse? Contact Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center at **231-929-4250**.
- To report abuse in another state, call the National Child Abuse Hotline at **800-422-4453**.