



Dear Parents/Guardians,

As your District Attorney and as a mother, my top priority is keeping our children safe.

As parents we strive every day to teach our children to be good to others, to be caring and compassionate and to make good

decisions. Those messages need to be translated into the digital world. This brochure is intended to provide you with some important information that will help your child make good choices to stay safe online and out in the world.

Safety Tips

- Monitor your children's online activity as you would the programs they watch on television, the books they read or the movies they see.
- Children and teenagers should not be "friends" with or communicate with people whom they do not know offline. It is easy for an adult to pose as a child online. Internet "friends" are strangers.
- Let your child or teenager know he/she can talk to you about anything they encounter online that causes them concern. Keep lines of communication open and check-in with your child often. Your willingness to listen will determine whether they confide in you the next time.

Marian P. Ryan



What Are Your Children Downloading?

With millions of apps and websites appealing to young people, it can seem difficult for a parent to keep up with the current trends in social media. Here are types of programs your children may be using:

Location-Based Apps

These apps bring groups of people together, often anonymously, based on their current location. For example, your teen could communicate with others who are near his/her current location. These sites have become fodder for cyberbullying and also allow strangers to know your child's location.

Video Chatting

Today's digital devices have built-in cameras for easy video chatting through apps, video games and messaging services. Many allow kids to randomly chat with strangers. This can be **very** dangerous.

Messaging Apps

These apps allow for text message conversations separate from cell phone providers' text message service. Messages may be from anonymous or untraceable senders.

Self-Destructing Apps

Teens are drawn to apps which promise to permanently delete a text, image or video after a few seconds. Often, the content of the messages are stored, copied and saved by the recipient without the knowledge of the sender.

Hidden Icons

These apps are meant to look like another app to hide content. For example, photos can be hidden in an app that appears as a calculator on the phone screen.

Online Safety Do's and Don'ts



Do:

- Set rules and expectations before giving your child a cell phone, smart phone, tablet or other digital device.
- Establish open lines of communication with your child early on and check-in about Internet and social media use often.
- Monitor your child's online presence and activity by talking to them about what they are doing online and through apps.
- Know your child's passwords for all online accounts.
- Determine as a family what information will be shared online such as names, places you visit and photos.
- Set privacy settings on all social media applications. Remember – online privacy settings change often and you may need to frequently adjust settings.

Don't:

- Allow children or teens to use their full name, birthday, school name or hometown on any social media site.
- Allow for your child's location to be tracked. Shut off "frequent locations" and "location services" on all apps.
- Allow children to take smart phones or tablets into their bedrooms at night. Establish a centrally-located charging area for all devices.
- Allow your child to download or purchase apps without your permission.

Sexting

“Sexting” is the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer or other digital device. Sexting can be a violation of child pornography laws and can result in a jail sentence, fines, and/or registration as a sex offender.

Sexting by the Numbers*

15 percent of teens who sent a nude or semi-nude image have sent it to someone they have never met;

24 percent of high school age teens have been involved in sexting;

55 percent of people who shared a sext will send it to multiple people; and

61 percent of all sexters say they were pressured to do it.

* Source: www.dosomething.org



Conversation Starters: How to Talk to Your Teenager About Sexting

Have you ever received a naked picture on your cell phone?

Has anyone ever asked or pressured you to send them a nude photo?

Do you know that sexting is illegal?

What could happen if you send or forward a naked picture to someone?

How likely do you think it is that an image intended for one person will be seen by others?

Law Enforcement Can Help

Contact your local police or the Middlesex District Attorney's Office if your child receives a message/image that is harassing, threatening or involves child pornography.

Cyber Safety Resources

- Net Smartz:
<http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents>
- National Crime Prevention Council:
<https://www.ncpc.org>
- Common Sense Media:
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety:
<https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide>



To learn more about our programs, please visit:

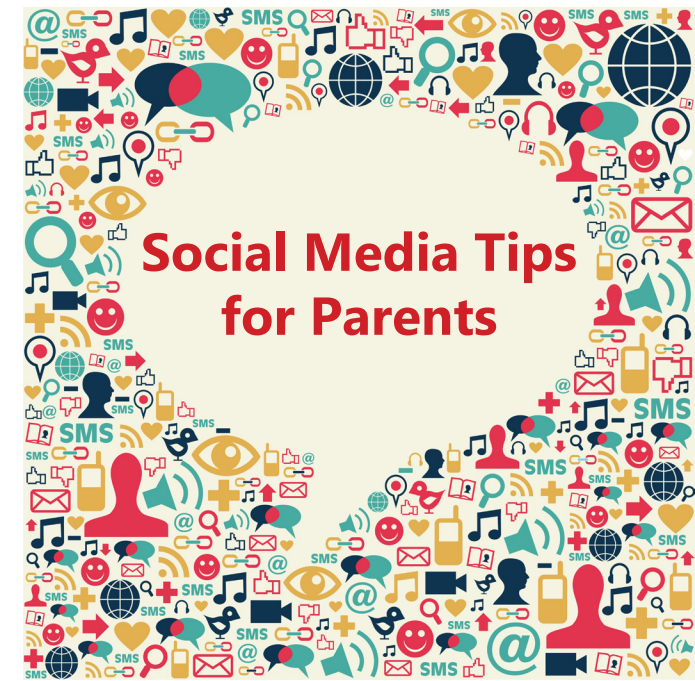
mpyinc.org
middlesexda.com

STOP CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to tease, humiliate, threaten and/or harass someone. Talk to your children about how they communicate online and encourage them to speak up if they witness cyberbullying. If you suspect your child is being bullied and it is impacting the school environment, you should report it to your child's school.

It is everyone's responsibility to stop cyberbullying.

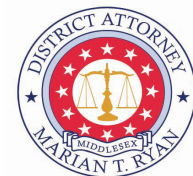
Technology Today



Social Media Tips for Parents



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