



How Can I Keep My Children
Safe Online?

A Guide for Parents

bellaliant.net/cybersafe

Bell Aliant

The Internet is a great place for young people to play, learn and stay connected. Here are some facts and tips to help you ensure your kids' online experience is always safe and enjoyable.

94% of young people access the Internet from home
(compared to 79 percent in 2001).

By Grade 11, 51% have their own Internet-connected
computer, separate from the family computer.

What are kids doing online?

Email

86% have email accounts

72% use web-based accounts such as Hotmail

Playing Games

89% of Grade 4 students play games online

Games decrease by grade while instant messaging (IM) increases

Instant Messaging

28% of Grade 4 students use IM on a daily basis

43% in Grade 5

86% by Grade 11

Chat Rooms

6% would choose to visit chat rooms over IM

Accessing the Internet

77% by Grade 8 download and listen to music on their computer

33% download TV shows and movies

Blogs/Online Journals

14% of Grade 4 students blog on a daily basis

Students who have their own computer with Internet access report spending twice as much time online as those who share a computer with family.

How big a role do parents play?

13% of students now say they are supervised by a parent when they go online (compared to 7% in 2001).

The number of Internet rules drop with age (33% fewer in Grade 8/9). Boys tend to have fewer rules.

Where there are no rules, 43% say they have visited offensive and age-inappropriate sites. Where there are rules/monitoring, it drops to 14%.

How can kids stay safe while blogging?

Blogs can be a great way for your children to be connected to the world.

Be aware of what information your children post on them.

Remind them to:

Never give out any personal information.

Be careful of what they write/post.

Don't believe everything they are told.

Unplug webcams when not in use.

Be aware that anything they broadcast online can't be taken back.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

Cyberbullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender, but it may also include threats, sexual remarks, derogatory labels (i.e., hate speech).

The use of sexual remarks and threats are sometimes present in cyberbullying, it is not the same as sexual harassment and does not involve sexual predators.

9% of youth report being bullied over the Internet, and 2% via cell phone. The incidence of online bullying is higher in the younger grades.

Make sure your child understands:

Be careful who they trust with their e-mail address, instant messaging nickname and phone number.
Never share any online passwords.
Tell an adult immediately if they or someone else is being bullied.
Don't respond to bullying messages, but keep the communications as proof.
Cyberbullying may be considered a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada—it is a serious offense.

Internet Luring

It's easy to assume a different identity online!

Almost 60% of kids pretend to be someone else online at some time.

Half of them do so to see what it would be like to be older, talk to older kids, or flirt with other people.
100% of these children expressed indignation that people would pretend to be someone else online.

21% of kids age 17 and younger have met an online acquaintance in real life.

Of these, 28% do not report a good experience.

In most of these cases the online acquaintance turned out to be “fat”, “ugly” or a “moron”.
3% experienced unwanted sexual interaction or vulgar sexual language and 2% involved physical violence.

Chatting on the Internet can be a great way to stay in touch if you follow a few precautions:

Never give out personal information (address, phone number, password or photograph).
Never make an appointment to meet in person without the permission of your parents or another adult.
If you do meet someone from online, do so in a public place and bring other people along.
Be aware of current Canadian laws—the age of consent is 14.
Report any indications of sexual exploitation online to www.cybertip.ca.

Online Gaming

Online gaming can be a fun way for kids to play with people around the world.

Make sure they understand:

- Never give out any personal information or account information.
- Don't be rude or insulting when gaming online.
- Remember the other "gamers" are still strangers.
- Use the same basic precautions you would with instant messaging or chatting.

Webcams

When used correctly, webcams are a great way to keep in touch with family and friends.

Talk to your kids about the following:

- Keep the webcam in a public room in the house—NOT in a child's bedroom.
- If the webcam must be kept in a child's room, make sure the computer monitor is positioned facing the door, and set a rule that the door must be kept open at all times they're online.
- Unplug the webcam when not in use—they can be manipulated remotely.
- Don't use a webcam with chatroom or IM use—live video can be captured by other participants.
- Remember anything they post or broadcast can't be taken back.
- Don't let anyone (including friends) convince them to do anything that makes them uncomfortable.

Chatting

Chatting involves two or more people communicating together in real-time over the Internet—it's quick and convenient!

Keep the following tips in mind:

- Remember everyone they "chat" with is a stranger.
- Regardless of how long they've been chatting with someone there is no way to guarantee they actually are who they're claiming to be.
- Use a nickname that does not hint at your real name and isn't sexually suggestive.
- Learn how to save a copy of a chat.
- Keep personal information a secret.