How can I be responsible online?

Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)
for Students with Disabilities

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

The internet offers a ton of learning opportunities, but it can be difficult to know **which content is appropriate** and **how to act online.** These guidelines can help you stay safe in the digital world.

Privacy in the digital world

- It is important to talk to your parents about what types websites you are using and how much information you share. In order to keep you safe, your parents might require you to "friend" or "add" them when you open a social media profile.

- Do not put private information online, such as your address, phone number, and school name. Keep in mind that this information might also be revealed through photos (e.g., a picture in front of your street address or your location being tagged through Location Services).

- Use passwords that are difficult for others to guess and only share passwords with your parents. If someone has access to your passwords, they can use your information or create posts pretending to be you.

- Ask your parents about privacy controls and how to use them. They can make you harder to find online and hide aspects of your profile from strangers.

- You may come into contact with strangers online.
  - On social media sites, only connect with people you know.
  - Online gaming often involves talking to strangers and your parents should monitor you closely.
  - A stranger should never tell you to keep online contact a secret. If this ever happens, tell a parent.

Being a good digital citizen

- Treat others with respect and kindness in person and in online spaces. You should not post anything online that you would not say to someone's face.

- Anything posted online stays around forever, so do not post anything you wouldn't want others to see. If you say anything mean or damaging to yourself or others, your post can be shared or screenshotted even if you try to delete it.

- Remember that not everything posted online is real. Sometimes people post untrue information, or people may pretend to be someone else. If you're not sure what to do, talk to your parents or teachers about learning how to know if something is real or fake.

- Notice when you are spending too much time on your devices. For example, you may want to limit device use at a restaurant or when having a face-to-face conversation.

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