



POLICE & SECURITY DEPARTMENT

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ONLINE SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR FAMILIES

Dan Coleman, MGH Police and Security, Feb 2020

USEFUL LINKS:

www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/stopthinkconnect-parent-and-educator-resources>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/digital-awareness-for-parents>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/is-your-child-social-media-savvy-1516111365>

<https://www.bark.us/blog/top-5-social-media-apps-parents-monitor/>

https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/02/tax-identity-theft-awareness-week-starts-today?utm_source=govdelivery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWz33PfSG5o> (SCAM CALL EXAMPLES)

CHALLENGES:

- TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA, SPONTANEOUS COMMUNICATION IS A FACT OF LIFE FOR ALL AGES
- AVAILABILITY, ACCESS, AND EVOLVING SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND APPS
- FRAUD, CRIMINAL ACTORS, PREDATORS, ETC
- PRIVACY LAWS, SETTINGS, ETC
- LOCATION, PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION, HABITS, FRIENDS, ETC
- TOO MUCH INFORMATION, TOO FEW PROTECTIONS-especially for kids
- TRUST VS SAFETY PLANNING FOR KIDS
- RESPECT/DESIRE TO AVOID “SNOOPING” VS REALITY OF ONLINE RISKS

RISKS:

- **DISTRACTED DRIVING:** texting, etc...Mass is now “Hands Free” as of Feb 23, 2020
- **SEXTING:** inappropriate images, words, relationships; adults/coaches/teachers/etc
- **GAMBLING:** online betting, fantasy leagues, financial data exposed-often involves off-shore
- **BULLYING:** can be the victim or perpetrator, recent suicide cases, criminal charges, etc
- **EXTORTION:** demands made to avoid sharing embarrassing/hurtful images, words, posts, etc
- **DATING SITES:** others posing, “catfishing”, predators, etc
- **ROBBERY:** sneaker deals, online sales of items used to lure and rob for items or cash
 - **Many police agencies now offer safe meeting space**
- **SCAM CALLS-TEXTS-EMAILS:** fraudulent sites or messages, schemes, ID theft, etc
 - **Nobody is kidnapped or injured in Mexico-DO NOT buy gift cards as instructed**
 - **The IRS or DEA is NOT going to arrest you-DO NOT divulge or confirm any information, DO NOT give them any money**
- **RIDE SHARING APPS:** Use caution-have a plan, use the alert settings, be aware

STRATEGIES: BE AN EXAMPLE AND PRACTICE SAFETY

- **BE INVOLVED:** if you are paying for the phone and access, know what they are doing with it
- **COMMUNICATE:** review the links above-and many others found online, be educated and aware of emerging threats/risks/trends/etc
 - **MAKE IT A HABIT-NOT JUST A ONE AND DONE CONVERSATION**



While virtually ALL of these platforms have been created for legitimate use and social interaction, they, and many other available online platforms, provide a potential universe for dangerous, illicit, and risky behavior

INSTAGRAM: VERY popular-lots of photos/videos posted, others can follow and comment

SNAPCHAT: One of the more popular-messages go away after a brief period...UNLESS the recipient takes a screenshot/recording of the post/video/words...can be shared later, etc

WHATSAPP: more common now, messaging that allows remote deleting of what was sent, etc

GROUP ME: uses wi-Fi, can stay within data limits (perhaps stay under the radar), images, money, limited control to delete

TWITTER: follow, comment, like, etc...can be like graffiti on a bathroom wall...opinions, free speech, influences others

- **Consider following people your kids follow to assess the content**

TIKTOK: Popular site for teens-15 second videos, cyberbullying or sexual content can often be transmitted/included

VENMO: (and other similar platforms): money transfers, can be used for legitimate transactions-know if your child is sending or receiving money

- Drugs, gambling, bullying, etc

ONLINE GAMING: kids playing video games online with people not known personally to them or you.

- Can talk on headsets, share personal information about locations, etc
- Can lead to other social media contacts

WHY WE NEED TO HAVE AN ACTIVE ROLE WITH OUR KIDS:

Not just what THEY are posting, but WHO and WHAT they are “following” and comments they may make/post.

Reputational damage, being associated with inappropriate or illegal CONTENT, “friend” or “follower” to criminal, threatening, or inappropriate PEOPLE

- Can end up being a victim, perpetrator, or witness to criminal conduct-(Police involved)

College applications, Military enlistments, job applications, security background checks, even prospective dating interests, other parents:

- ALL will look at the “online profiles”
- Is THIS what they desire?
- Is THIS what they will accept?

First Amendment allows freedom of speech, and that includes online posts, etc. We are ALL entitled to our opinions.

- **BUT**...there ARE limits; hate speech, fighting words, threats, etc
- Even a valid First Amendment statement about an ideology, belief, person, group, or opinion could have implications for people-whether fair or not-it is a reality;
 - Labeled by others as...(fill-in the blank)
 - Viewed negatively or targeted by others with an opposing opinion
 - Retaliatory comments/actions
 - Viewed positively or targeted by those with a more aggressive opinion
 - Recruitment or radicalized to an extreme