

CYBER SAFETY

- **Be involved - Consider activities you can work on together, whether it be playing a game, researching a topic you had been talking about (e.g., family vacation spots, a particular hobby, a historical figure), or putting together a family newsletter. This will allow you to supervise your child's online activities while teaching her good computer habits.**
- **Keep your computer and or gaming system in an open area - If your computer or gaming system is in a high-traffic area, you will be able to easily monitor the activity. Not only does this accessibility deter a child from doing something he/she knows they are not allowed to do, it also gives you the opportunity to intervene if you notice a behavior that could have negative consequences. Request that your child turns in their cell-phone every evening; not allowing them to keep it in their rooms overnight. You cannot see what's behind closed doors.**
- **Set rules and warn about dangers - Make sure your child knows the boundaries of what he/she is allowed to do on the computer, on their gaming system an on their cell phones. These boundaries should be appropriate for the child's age, knowledge, and maturity, but they may include rules about how long he/she is allowed to be active online, what sites he/she is allowed to visit, what software programs or apps he/she can and cannot use, and what tasks or activities he/she is allowed to do.**
- **You should also talk to children about the dangers of the internet so that they recognize suspicious behavior or activity. Discuss the risks of sharing certain types of information (e.g., that they're home alone) and the benefits to only communicating and sharing information with people they know. The goal isn't to scare them, it's to make them more aware. Make sure to include the topic of cyberbullying in these discussions.**
- **Monitor activity - Be aware of what your child is doing on any electronic device that can access the internet, wifi or cellular data; including which websites he/she is visiting. If he/she is using email, instant messaging, or chat rooms, try to get a sense of who he/she is corresponding with and whether she actually knows them. Many times children have multiple 'follower's or 'friends' in social media apps and they are completely unaware of their location or their motives or intentions.**
- **Keep lines of communication open - Let your child know that he/she can approach you with any questions or concerns about behaviors or problems he/she may have encountered on the computer.**
- **Consider partitioning your family computer into separate accounts - Most operating systems give you the option of creating a different user account for each user. If you're worried that your child may accidentally access, modify, and/or delete your files, you can give him/her a separate account and decrease the amount of access and number of privileges they have.**
- **Consider implementing parental controls - You may be able to set some parental controls within your browser. For example, Internet Explorer allows you to restrict or allow certain websites to be viewed on your computer, and you can protect these settings with a password. To find those options, click Tools on your menu bar, select Internet Options, choose the Content tab, and click the Enable... button under Content Advisor.**