

Ten Tips for Kids for Viral Media

Never give any personal information to anyone you meet online. That means no pictures, first or last names, no schools, phone numbers (they can track down your home), passwords, ages or credit card information.

Never hook up with anyone you don't already know. Don't tell anyone your schedule and don't say where you'll be hanging out. People are often not who they say they are. Remember, 1 in 3 kids will be sexually solicited online.

Don't fill out any "fun" questionnaires that are forwarded to you, even if they are from your friends. You are in a world where everything can get forwarded. All those personal things about you could land in the hands of someone who could use them to hurt you.

Make sure you know everyone on your buddy list. If you haven't met the person face-to-face, they may not be who they say they are. Also, Instant Messaging a stranger is an invasion of their privacy.

You don't have to answer emails or IMs from people you don't know. As a matter of fact, you shouldn't. Who knows who they are? Even if they say they are "David's friend," David could be a lucky guess. "Kids" you meet in chatrooms may actually be adults.

Don't post pictures of yourself. You may have an older sibling who uses MySpace or other social networking sites. Just because they have done it doesn't make it a safe idea. Pictures with identifiers like where you go to school can be shopping lists for people with bad intentions.

Never email a picture or send a picture from a cell phone to someone you don't know. Pictures identify you. They also can be forwarded to someone else.

Don't send pictures of other people. Forwarding an embarrassing picture of someone else is a form of bullying. How would you like it?

No text messaging someone you don't know. They'll have your phone number and be able to find you. Also, it's an intrusion into their privacy.

Don't download content without your parent's permission. Many sites have spyware that will damage your computer. Other sites have really inappropriate content. Your parents can check your computer's URL history, so you can't hide where you've been.