

Internet Safety Tips

The Internet is a real community of people who are connected by computers, so **treat people that you don't know on the Internet as strangers** that you might meet in a street.

Do not give out any personal information related to your family, friends or yourself like full names, addresses, telephone or mobile numbers or those of your parents. Other information like the name and location of your school or details of school activities can also identify you to others, whether you are in a chat room, message board or newsgroup. Sometimes there are people who watch out for such information, and they can put together a picture of your activities over a period of time that could be several weeks. So be careful with what you say, and never give out your personal details.

Be aware when choosing your chat username or email username not to pick a provocative name (one that will make people angry or is inappropriate for your age) as you would be more likely to be sent inappropriate emails or harassed online.

Never agree to meet someone whom you've met through the Internet, in real life without your parent's permission, and if they agree, never go alone, but go with a trusted adult.

Use your common sense. Someone you are chatting to may not be who they say they are.

Do not fill out forms online without consulting your parents. There are websites which seek personal information and which use this information for marketing or other commercial purposes. Always check a website's privacy statement. This describes what a website will do with your information.

Do not open an email from someone you do not know as you may download viruses (which even come from people you do know), or it may have contents that can upset you.

Many chain emails or emails with virus warnings are hoaxes. Before you forward virus warnings to your friends and family, check that it is not a hoax.

Never send pictures of yourself or any other personal material to a friend you met online without consulting your parents first.

Observe good net etiquette. See the WISE KIDS Guide to Net Etiquette.

Always tell your parents/teachers if you come across stuff on the Internet which makes you feel uncomfortable, or if someone on the Internet harasses you or threatens you.

Never respond to rude, obscene or threatening messages (whether in chat, newsgroups or message boards) which make you feel uncomfortable. Tell your parents or teachers about such messages and where possible, save a copy of the message so that your parents or teachers can forward it to your Internet Service Provider, or use it to make a police report.

Always assess the information you read on websites. Because it's on the Internet does not mean that it's always truthful information, especially when it comes to health issues, or when you are doing research for homework. Check that the website you are getting your information from is a reliable and reputable one, not one built on hearsay.

When subscribing to public newsletters or programs like media plugins or downloads that require you to give out an email address, **use a separate email address from your personal one.** This will lessen the number of unwanted emails that you receive.

Be responsible and ethical when using the Internet whether at home or in a public online centre or cyber café, for e.g. not plagiarising (copying) information from the Net, using the computer equipment responsibly, not causing harm to others through your online activities.

Adapted from guidance on [Wisekids.org.uk](http://www.wisekids.org.uk)

WISE KIDS Guide to Net Etiquette

Net Etiquette are the rules that have developed as people have begun to communicate and interact on the Internet. The following are some good net etiquette rules to follow:

Before you join in a newsgroup or discussion board, always check that your questions are relevant to the group. It is a good idea to watch the conversation (in internet jargon, this is called "lurking"), before you join in. Most groups have an FAQ, (Frequently Asked Questions) list, and if there is no standard message saying where you might find this, then you can put a question to the group/list to ask where you might be able to find an FAQ list.

Never respond to rude or threatening messages whether in chat, newsgroups or message boards.

Always leave if the conversation makes you uncomfortable.

Never engage in a flame war. That is a shouting match (through text) conducted between 2 or more people.

Never send an email in capital letters. That is considered to be shouting on the Internet.

Never say nasty or untrue things about others especially in public forums, newsgroups, or chat. These remain in many archives and you could be charged with libel.

Never forward personal emails sent to you to others without checking with the original sender first.

Similarly, when forwarding an email to others, respect the privacy of your group of friends or family. Do not publicly broadcast all their email addresses.

When composing emails, use the subject field, as it helps the recipient to identify the email quicker.

When replying to emails, particularly if they are long and detailed, it is polite to not quote the entire message in reply, but to quote only what is necessary. This saves on bandwidth. Sometimes email threads can get very large! However there are many instances, especially in a work environment when entire emails are used in replies, and entire email discussion threads are kept. These are maintained as a record of a work discussion, and often takes the place of normal paper correspondence.

Remember that the Internet is 'a real space', and email gives you quick and direct access to many people that you would not have similar access to before. People respond to using this space in different ways. It is always polite and considerate to reply to emails, even if it is only to say that you will give a fuller response when you have more time.