



# THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

## — ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS —

### ONLINE FRIENDS

Help your children develop the knowledge and social skills to make sensible decisions about the people they meet online.

#### **1** TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

Tell your children to watch out for people who are overly friendly, for example, appearing to have exactly the same taste in music, movies, actors, etc. An online predator's aim is to gain the trust of children. Predators will therefore be very kind to them at first and often pretend to be their 'soul mate'.

#### **2** INCONSISTENCIES IN FRIENDS' STORIES

Advise your children to look out for inconsistencies in their online friends' stories. For example, they should be very cautious if one of their online friends all of a sudden turns out to be much older than they originally said. If this is the case, it's best to break all contact.

#### **3** FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCT

Even if your child has the slightest of suspicions, they shouldn't hesitate to talk to a trusted adult.

#### **4** THE DELICATE TOPIC OF SEX

Research has shown that teenagers who talk about sex with strangers online are more likely to come into contact with predators. These predators usually try to diminish any inhibitions your child may have by gradually introducing sexual content into the conversations. Tell your children that if online strangers start talking about sexual content in any way shape or form they should tell a trusted adult and stop talking to them immediately.

#### **5** CONFIDE IN A TRUSTED ADULT

Make sure your children know they can always come to you or another trusted adult if they feel threatened by someone or if they're uncomfortable because of something they encountered online. **Help them to report any concerns to the police or to the website in question.**

#### **6** MEETING OFFLINE FRIENDS – SET THE RULES

If your children want to meet online friends in the offline world for the first time, agree on strict rules **Download the "meeting strangers" tip sheet.**

#### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

**OnGuard Online:**

[www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov)

**INHOPE:**

[www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)

**Find out more from the Insafe network:**

[www.saferinternet.org](http://www.saferinternet.org)



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