



**CRIME STOPPERS
CYBER SAFETY
RESOURCE GUIDES:**

Cyber Safety

*We remain committed to our mission
to **solve and prevent serious crime**
in the Greater Houston Area.*



KNOW THE RISKS

Social media platforms are everchanging. While **Snapchat**, **Instagram**, **TikTok**, and **YouTube** are the top apps of concern at this time, that could change at any moment. Make sure to pay attention to platforms that:

- track location
- allow direct messages
- allow disappearing content
- have a significant amount of inappropriate content
- provide ample opportunities for cyberbullying or victimization.

Location Services

Most apps and social media platforms do not actually need your location to function correctly, but they automatically track your location when you download the app anyways. Make sure to go into settings and turn off location services.

Apple devices:

- Settings > privacy > location services

Android devices:

- Settings > security & location > location

Snapchat:

- Go to your profile > settings > see my location > check off **ghost mode**



Direct Messages

Direct messages (DM) provide ample opportunity for victimization. Direct messages are easier to erase and harder to monitor than text messages, so it is important to set rules and guidelines surrounding direct messages.

Questions to consider:

- Who is your student allowed to direct message with?
- What is expected of your student when they receive a direct message from a stranger?
- Is your student allowed to delete direct messages?
- What are the consequences for failing to adhere to the agreed upon guidelines?



Inappropriate Content

On average, students see pornography online for the first time between 8-10 years old. Inappropriate content appears across all platforms even those that are labeled kid-friendly.

Questions to consider:

- What is the platform doing to combat inappropriate content?
- What safety settings are available on the platform to reduce inappropriate content?
- What should your student do when they happen upon inappropriate content?

Disappearing & Ephemeral Content

Students tend to utilize platforms like **Snapchat** that provide the opportunity for disappearing content to engage in risky behaviors. 1 in 4 students take part in some form of sexting or sending sexually provocative images online and often this is done via disappearing content.

Know the risk:

- Any naked, partially naked, or image that appears to contain nudity of a minor is considered child pornography and is punishable by law.
- Content sent via social media is saved and owned by that platform. Even though the content may appear to be gone on the user's device it is still on a server and is not gone forever.

Social Media Monitoring Tools:

Bark (best for social media monitoring: Analyzes text, emails, social media and then sends you concerning content along with suggestions on how to address the situation and talking points. You must have device to install OR the user must accept all push notifications to connect with all social media, text, and email platforms. Stays up to date on language and signs of bullying, suicide, violence, adult content, depression etc so more passive content of concern can be monitored. Options for \$5/month (\$49 annually) or \$14/month (\$99 annually).

Qustodio (best for teens): See what websites are visited, block dangerous content, see communications, protect privacy, manage how and when to be online. Automatically reports activity back to you and has a dashboard where you can view and manager online activity. Free option.

Net Nanny (best for young kids): Limits the type of content and websites your kid can access and allows you to schedule when your child can access the internet and social media. You must have the physical device to install software. Various plans, but the most common option is for a 5-device plan for \$79.99.

Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is the electronic version of bullying and can be punishable by law. It occurs when individuals engage in bullying using any electronic communication devices including a phone, computer, tablet, gaming console, or camera.

Cyberbullying includes:

- Sending viscous text/instant messages or comments.
- Spreading rumors or gossip by posting it to social networking sites.
- Sending embarrassing pictures or videos without permission.
- Creating a fake profile and pretending to be someone else.

ONLINE VICTIMIZATION

Predators are online looking for vulnerabilities. It is important for students to never complain about their friends or family online. 79% of minor sex trafficking interactions begin online and ½ of the minor sex trafficking investigations in Harris County in 2019 had coinciding online adds. Because 10-14 is the target age for online victimization, it is important to know the signs of trafficking and to openly communicate with your student about this.

Signs of grooming:

- Targeting a Victim
- Befriending/Gain Trust
- Fulfill a Need
- Sexualize the Relationship
- Isolate the Victim
- Capitalizing

Read our [Human Trafficking Resource Guide for more information on grooming.](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

The target age for online victimization is 10-14 years old.

New social media platforms or new features on existing platforms that provide an easy opportunity for victimization should always be considered. Here are some other components to look out for:

Opportunities for Victimization include:

- Live Streaming
- Video Chats
- Group Chats
- Public Platforms
- Increased opportunity to communicate with strangers
- Increased opportunities to search and or find inappropriate content

YOUTUBE IS THE SECOND MOST-USED SEARCH ENGINE AFTER GOOGLE.



Did you know?

500

HOURS OF CONTENT ARE UPLOADED TO YOUTUBE EVERY MINUTE.

SAFEGUARDS FOR STUDENTS

We cannot escape the internet, and technology is not all bad, but it is important to have ongoing safety conversations. Regular, open, and honest conversations about technology usage and potential dangers is the best line of defense against victimization.

Remind your student that:

- The internet is a shared space
- The internet is not private
- The internet is permanent
- The internet creates ample opportunities for exposures
- The internet can have a long-term impact

There are a variety of things students can do to protect themselves and deter victimization.

Encourage your student to:

- Block inappropriate or unwanted content and users.
- Report any concerning content or users.
- Protect their personal information by not sharing things like their name, address, phone number, school etc.
- Use an alias online.
- Keep passwords private.
- Not accept friend requests from strangers.
- Talk to a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uneasy.

MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH:

~~ONLY PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW ME CAN SEE WHAT I POST...~~

FACT:

ANYONE WHO FOLLOWS YOU CAN SCREEN-SHOT YOUR CONTENT & SHARE IT.

MYTH:

~~IT'S OKAY TO POST INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT BECAUSE IT DISAPPEARS...~~

FACT:

THE INTERNET IS PERMANENT. EVEN CONTENT THAT "DISAPPEARS" IS SAVED ONTO AN APPLICATION'S HARD DRIVE.

Encourage your student to think before they post.

Contact Us

We hope that this resource guide is beneficial to you, your family and your community. Please reach out if you have any questions, would like more information or would like to request a presentation.

For a student related presentation requests and questions, contact: ssi@crime-stoppers.org

For parent & community requests and questions, contact: scp@crime-stoppers.org

How to Report



Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)



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