

# NAVIGATING A DIGITAL WORLD

## Tips for Youth



## Before going online...

### Set Guidelines

Make some rules together with your family before you go online, like the time of day and length of time you can use technology, and sites and apps you are allowed to use. Don't bend the rules or use unapproved apps without their permission.

### Limit Electronic Use

Be self-aware of how often you are on your phone, computer and other electronic devices. Make sure you are keeping a healthy balance between digital and in-person activities.

### Consider What It Means to Be Responsible Online

Keep in mind that no digital message is completely private, including texts, private/direct messages, etc. Others may be watching your online activity, and law enforcement can recover all messages—even if you deleted them. Using your phone or the Internet to embarrass, threaten, harass or hurt others is irresponsible and can have serious consequences.

### Understand Digital Behavior

Be aware that many apps, social media sites and cell service providers have rules about behavior. If you break them, your account—and every account in your home—could be disabled or canceled. Law enforcement may become involved in serious situations.

## While online...

### Be Respectful of Others

Consider whether your actions contribute to creating a positive digital community. Don't write mean things to or about others, spread rumors/gossip or post things that might make others feel unsafe or uncomfortable, even if you mean it as a "joke." Never share others' *private* information, messages, photos or videos without their permission.

### Be a Positive Role Model

Model positive digital behavior by writing supportive posts and messages and applauding positive content that affirms people and communicates respect. Don't follow along when others are behaving negatively and remember to press pause and think before hitting "send."

### Engage in Respectful Dialogue

If you choose to engage in online discussions about controversial topics or issues, remember to always pause and think: *Is this how I want my ideas to be expressed online?* Focus your discussion on the ideas and not the individual(s) with whom you're communicating. It's okay to agree to disagree.

### Don't Confide in People You Don't Know

It is very easy for people to lie about who they are online. Use caution when sharing personal information or discussing your life with someone you meet online.

**Never Meet a Stranger without Parental Approval**

Don't arrange to meet up in-person with people you have met online without your family's permission.

**Maintain Privacy and Safeguard Security Information**

Don't share personal or private information online—like your full name, school name, home address, phone number and personal photos—with people you don't know or trust. Use the privacy and security features for social media apps you use. Keep passwords and PINs to yourself, but share this information with your parents/guardians. They'll trust you more if you're

open with them and they can help you if a serious problem occurs.

**Be Cautious of Messages from Strangers**

Don't open messages or attachments from people you don't know. In many instances it may be best to just delete them and even report them.

**Keep Electronics in View at All Times**

Don't leave electronic devices out of sight because they can be hacked or stolen.

## What can I do if I *experience* CYBERBULLYING?

**Don't Respond**

Don't respond to bullying or inappropriate messages, but save them as proof.

**Act as an Ally**

Support people who are targets of mean behavior and bullying by reaching out to the target and/or telling the aggressor to stop. Report what is happening through the site's anonymous reporting procedures or tell a trusted adult in your life what is happening.

**Communicate Issues with a Trusted Adult**

Talk about problems you experience or witness online with an adult that you trust, like a family member, teacher or school counselor.

**Report Behavior/Incidents**

Always report cyberbullying, hate messages, inappropriate sexual content and threats (including possible suicide attempts) to an adult family member, school staff or the police right away. Use ADL's online [Cyber-Safety Action Guide](#) to find out how to report inappropriate content to popular online companies, including reporting abuse to apps if available. For serious or continuing problems, file complaints with Internet Service Providers, social media companies, e-mail services, Web sites, cell phone companies, etc. They can find the offenders and take further action.



**Ask for Assistance in Reporting**

If you don't feel comfortable reporting problems yourself, ask an adult to do it for you. Keeping the people close to you aware of what's going on and seeking their support helps when you are targeted.

**Stop and Reject Communication**

Block the cell phone numbers and electronic communication (e.g., posts, texts, etc.) of people who are sending unwanted messages. Change your phone numbers, e-mail addresses, screen names and other online information, if necessary.

**Log Off!**

When in doubt about what to do, log off or shut down and ask for help from a trusted adult.

**Resources for Youth, Parents/Families and Educators**  
[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-strategies](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-strategies)