

## INTERNET SAFETY

The Lincolnwood Police Department receives numerous questions from concerned parents about internet safety. The Crime Prevention Unit routinely conducts Internet Safety talks for parents and teachers. Some of the information we used in the presentation is available on the following well known internet sites:

- [www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com)
- [www.wiredsafety.com](http://www.wiredsafety.com)
- [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

The FBI website contains information for parents to determine if their children are at risk while on-line:

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

To minimize the chances of an on-line exploiter victimizing your child, you can:

- Talk to your child about sexual victimization.
- Spend time with your children on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite on-line destinations.
- Keep the computer in a common room in the house, not in your child's bedroom. It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household.
- Use parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software. While electronic chat can be a great place for children to make new friends and discuss various topics of interest, it is also prowled by computer-sex offenders. Use of chat rooms, in particular, should be continuously monitored. While parents should utilize these mechanisms, they should not totally rely on them.
- Always maintain access to your child's on-line account and randomly check his/her e-mail. Be aware that your child could be contacted through the United States Mail. Be candid with your child about your access and explain why.
- Teach your child the responsible use of the resources on-line. There is much more to the on-line experience than chat rooms.
- Find out what computer safeguards are used by your child's school, the public library, and at the homes of your child's friends. These are all places where your child could encounter an on-line predator.
- Understand, even if your child was a willing participant in any form of sexual exploitation, that he/she is not at fault and is the victim. The offender always bears the complete responsibility for his or her actions.

Instruct your children to never:

- arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they have met on-line;
- upload (post) pictures of themselves onto the internet or on-line service to people they do not personally know;
- give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number;
- download pictures from an unknown source, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit images; or
- respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing.

The internet opens up a world of knowledge and possibilities to children. However, without proper supervision, they can be exposed to material that is dangerous and adult in nature. Please make sure your children surf safely.