

## Back to School Internet Safety Tips for Parents

Online schooling – it is a reality for children growing up during a pandemic. Virtual learning and lessons have piqued the interest of children and opened the door to internet explorations. While there are many educational, entertaining, and age-appropriate websites, there are also online pitfalls and internet scams. Parents need to be vigilant about how children use the internet, what sites they visit, and what they do with online opportunities. The Better Business Bureau shares this list of tips to encourage internet safety and to avoid allowing children to be easy online targets. Parents, please be alert for

### Creating accounts on websites without permission

Social media sites are ripe with strangers with intentions that may be quite different than yours. Many sites are designed to collect and sell unauthorized user details and behaviors to advertisers looking to engage in targeted marketing. When creating an account, some kids may falsely create a birthdate to meet the minimum age requirement. Know what your child is doing online and keep track of the social media sites and accounts to which they have access.

### Contests and giveaways

Contests and giveaways often collect a hefty amount of personal information on their entry forms. Many are thinly disguised ways of collecting personal or financial information that could lead to identity theft. Make sure your child doesn't have access to banking or credit card information and supervise the filling out of any forms.

### Phishing

Adults are not the only ones who receive spam and junk mail. Kids often get junk mail and since they don't have much online experience, they are more likely to be susceptible to click on links and answer questions they probably shouldn't. While some emails may be legitimate, the last thing parents want, or need, is a \$500 bill from a fraudulent website where a purchase may have been made. Or worse, a situation where shared personal information can be tracked back to your home.

### Apps

Short for "applications," apps are downloaded software that operate on various devices, such as smart phones. However, certain apps might collect and share personal information about your child or target your child with ads. Even free apps may include paid features, and children may not understand that some apps or game features cost money since they were labeled as free to download. They may click on these so-called free games and end up costing parents or guardians a hefty bill at the end of the month.

### File sharing sites

Many websites allow children to download free media. What they may not know is these sites often come with the risk of downloading a virus, allowing identity thieves to access the gaming device, personal computer, or cell phone that's being used. From there, the cyberthief can track financial transactions, physical location, and/or tap into the household Wi-Fi without anyone knowing it.



To learn more about regulations and guidelines designed to protect children from false advertising and sites that collect personal information, privacy protections, parental controls, and more, visit

<https://www.bbb.org/article/news-releases/22499-bbb-tip-staying-safe-on-the-internet>