



Start With Trust®

Social Networking Safety for Children:

Explain the difference between sharing and over sharing.

While social networking is about connecting with people, kids should never share personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, bank account numbers, passwords or their Social Security number. Talk about what constitutes inappropriate photos or language and stress the fact that once something is posted, it can never fully be taken back, even if deleted.

Join them online.

Parents should set up their own account in the same social networks as their children. This will help them to better understand what social networking is all about. Parents can also “Friend” their child and keep an unobtrusive eye on what they are doing.

“Never talk to strangers” applies online too.

One of the first rules kids learn is to never talk to strangers. Parents should remind children that the rule holds true when online. Even though chatting with a stranger online can seem harmless, the relationship can evolve and grow until the stranger has earned a child’s trust, and can then exploit it.

Set strict privacy settings.

Most social networking sites let users determine who they want to share information with. Advise children about restricting access to social network profiles to only friends or users in safe networks such as their school, clubs or church groups.

Keep the channels of communication open.

Let kids know that you are always ready to talk if they are ever threatened, bullied or feel uncomfortable about an experience they had online. Report concerns about data collection from children under 13 to the Children’s Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus at www.caru.org/complaint.

For more Austin area consumer tips, scams and alerts, read the BBB blog (Austin.bbb.org/blog) for the most up-to-date details. If there are specific topics you’d like to get advice on from BBB, please let us know by calling 512-445-2911 or email us at info@austin.bbb.org.