Children's Advocacy Centers of Pennsylvania

These 5 Rules for Online Safety help you stay protected, strengthen digital boundaries, and watch out for unusual behavior.

1

Private information is private

No one online should ask for or try to see your personal information — your full name, address, school, phone number, passwords, or private photos. Just like with your body, your private information belongs to YOU. Only trusted adults should help you when something needs to be shared for safety or schoolwork.

2

No dirty jokes, no secret chats

We don't use silly names for private body parts — and we don't play digital games that involve them either. If someone sends or asks for pictures, videos, or messages about bodies or private parts, that is NOT safe. Block, report, and tell an adult immediately.

3

It's okay to say "NO" online, too!

You're the boss of your online world. You never have to reply to a message that feels weird, talk to people you don't know in real life, accept friend requests you don't want, turn on your camera, or join a game or chat if you don't feel comfortable.

If it doesn't feel right — stop, log off, and tell someone you trust.

4

Some secrets aren't safe — especially online

No one online should ever tell you to keep something secret from your parents, teachers, or caregivers. Not a message, a picture, a game, or a conversation. If a person says things like "don't tell anyone," "this is our little secret," or "your parents won't understand," that is a major red flag — tell a trusted adult right away.

5

Watch out for Tricky T's (texts, tokens and time alone online)

If someone online sends you gifts in games, offers tokens, points, or upgrades, wants private chats, tries to keep you away from other friends, compliments you too much, or tries to get you alone on video or messaging... it may not be safe. These behaviors are often used by people trying to gain trust the wrong way.

If you're not sure — check with a trusted adult.

Be on the lookout — online!

If someone online ever breaks the safety rules or makes you feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused: try to say "NO," block them, log off, and tell a trusted adult right away! If the first adult doesn't help, keep telling until you feel safe.

Join the fight against child abuse today.

penncac.org

Talk about devices, digital boundaries, and online behaviors

Use the 5 Rules for Online Safety to start ongoing conversations with your child about how they use phones, tablets, computers, and gaming platforms.

Make it a habit to ask your child how they feel about their online world

After using apps, games, video chat, social media, or online school platforms, ask your child if everyone followed the online safety rules and if anything made them feel scared, confused, unsafe, or uncomfortable.

Listen to your child — in the little things and the big things

Let your child know their voice matters online just as much as it does offline. Assure them you won't get angry if they ever tell you about a message, chat, picture, or online interaction that worried them.

Banish blame and shame from your conversations

Children should feel supported when talking about online mishaps or uncomfortable digital experiences. If something happens online that upsets your child, stay calm and avoid reacting in a way that makes them feel embarrassed, responsible, or at fault.

Know what online grooming is and be on the alert

Instead of focusing on "stranger danger," watch for strange online behavior that could indicate someone is trying to groom your child — or you — by building trust, offering gifts, creating secret chats, or isolating your child from others.

Have questions or want to know more about how you can prevent child abuse? Contact a Children's Advocacy Center.

Scan the code or visit penncac.org to find your local CAC.

Use these 5 Rules for Online Safety to start conversations about:

- what apps your child uses
- who they talk to online
- what makes them feel uncomfortable online
- how they know when something "doesn't feel right"
- what to do if someone tries to break safety rules

Listen. Believe. Support. Never shame. Never blame.
Children should feel safe telling you anything they experience online.

ChildLine is available 24/7 to take calls about suspected child abuse in Pennsylvania.
Don't wait, don't hesitate.

1-800-932-0313