



Proactive Steps for Interacting Safely Online

Proactive Safety Checklist for Individuals & Families

Establish “Online = Real Life” as a Family Principle

- Hold a family conversation explaining that online interactions have real physical, emotional, legal, and life-or-death consequences (use real stories, not hypotheticals).
- Explicitly state: “Nothing that happens online is ‘not real.’”
- Agree as a household that fear, embarrassment, or confusion online always justifies asking for help immediately.

Print & Post Critical Guides (Visibility Matters)

- Print and bookmark the Red Flags of Predators & Scammers checklists and post it near shared devices.
- Print and bookmark the Reporting Guides to keep near shared devices and review regularly.
- Print and bookmark the Trusted Resources and post it visibly.

Create a “No Punishment for Reporting” Covenant

- Verbally promise children and teens they will never be punished for reporting:
 - sextortion
 - sexual messages
 - grooming attempts
 - scams
 - bullying
- Say this out loud and repeat it regularly
- Explain why predators rely on fear and silence to operate
- Reinforce: “The fastest way out of danger is telling an adult immediately.”

Define Family Rules for Online Interactions (Clear, Simple, Repeatable)

- Never move a conversation to a “secret” or encrypted app at someone else’s request
- Never send photos, videos, or voice recordings to online-only contacts
- Never accept gifts, money, or in-game items from strangers
- Never meet someone from online without parental presence and public location
- Never keep online relationships or conversations secret from family





Practice “What If” Scenarios (Rehearsal Saves Lives)

- Role-play:
 - Receiving an explicit image
 - Being asked for photos
 - Being threatened with exposure
 - Being asked for money or gift cards
 - Being told “don’t tell your parents”
- Practice the exact words to say:
 - “I need help right now.”
 - “Something doesn’t feel right.”
 - “I’m being threatened online.”
- Practice turning the device off immediately and finding a trusted adult

Identify Trusted Adults & Safe Escalation Paths

- List at least 3 trusted adults outside the immediate household
- Explain when to escalate to:
 - school administrators
 - law enforcement
 - crisis support
- Explain that blocking alone is not enough in crimes like sextortion or grooming

Build Awareness of “Friends of Friends” & Impersonation Risks

- Explain how criminals exploit mutual friends to create false trust
- Teach children to verify identities using a second channel
- Practice asking: “How do I know this is really you?”
- Normalize declining friend requests even from people with mutual connections

Normalize Intuition as a Safety Signal

- Teach that intuition is a survival instinct, not paranoia
- Reinforce: “If it feels off, it is off.”
- Explain that predators deliberately try to create self-doubt and confusion

Set Household Norms for Social Media & Gaming

- Agree that strangers are always strangers even in games
- Agree that harassment, sexual talk, or pressure results in immediate exit and report
- Agree that accounts can be unfollowed, unfriended, muted, or deleted without explanation
- Explicitly discuss high-risk platforms and apps referenced in the curriculum





Establish Evidence-Preservation Habits (Without Self-Handling)

- Teach how to screenshot messages without engaging further
- Teach not to argue, negotiate, or explain to predators
- Teach that evidence matters, but safety comes first
- Reinforce that adults handle reporting and escalation

Prepare for Deepfakes & Image-Based Abuse

- Explain that fake sexual images and videos exist
- Establish a code word for deepfake voice scams
- Reinforce: being depicted does not equal consent or guilt
- Teach:
 - never share
 - never comment
 - never forward
- Practice supporting victims instead of reacting publicly

Community & Extended Family Alignment

- Share these rules with:
 - grandparents
 - babysitters
 - extended family
 - sports teams
 - church or youth leaders
- Align on:
 - reporting expectations
 - no-punishment rule
 - immediate adult escalation
- Encourage schools and organizations to adopt similar language

Quarterly Review & Repetition

- Revisit this checklist every 3 months
- Update examples as platforms change
- Re-state the “ask for help immediately” promise
- Re-practice scenarios

Core Message to Repeat Often

1. Predators fear two things: intuition and trusted adults.
2. Asking for help immediately is the safest and strongest response.

