Warning signs

Children who have been victimized over the Internet may not be willing to share the details of their experience, especially with a parent. For this reason it is important that parents and guardians are aware of some of the signs that your child may have been the victim of cyberbullying or a child predator.

Warning signs of Cyberbullying include:

- Child avoids the computer, cell phone and other electronic devices and appears stressed when he or she receives and e-mail, instant message, text or phone call.

- Child withdraws from family, friends, school and social events.

- Child avoids conversations about computer use.

- Exhibits low self esteem, declining grades and/or poor eating/sleeping habits.

Warning signs of child predators include:

- Child spends excessive amounts of time on the computer and becomes angry when he or she cannot get on the computer.

- Child minimizes the screen or turns the computer off when parents enter the room.

- Strange numbers on your telephone bill.

- Inappropriate images or websites on the computer.

- Child receives gifts from someone you don't know such as webcams or cell phones.

- Child withdraws from family, friends, school and social events.

DuPage County State's Attorney's Office

503 N. County Farm Road
Wheaton, IL 60187
www.dupageco.org/statesattorney
(630) 407-8000
TDD (630) 407-8003
SAO@dupageco.org
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

DuPage SAO

A Message From

Bob Berlin

DuPage County State's Attorney

Millions of young people use the Internet every day as a source of information, education and amusement. Through e-mail, instant messaging and chat rooms, children can communicate with family and friends whenever they like. Additionally, smart phones also allow children to communicate wirelessly, away from the family computer. The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter also allow a forum for our children to communicate with each other as well as others they may not know.

As parents it is our responsibility to keep our children safe from the possible dangers that can lurk behind the anonymity of the Internet. To do so, we must be engaged in our children's lives and know with whom they are communicating over the Internet. We also must set them up for success by letting them know the rules for surfing the Internet and what they can and cannot do while online.

By being vigilant and communicating with our children we can help ensure their safety while on the Internet.

The DuPage County State's Attorney's Office

Internet Safety

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert B. Berlin

Social networking

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter allow children to explore new interests and keep in touch with friends and family. They also however, can lure your children into revealing too much personal information and jeopardize their online privacy. You can help your children take control of their personal information utilizing some of the following information:

- Make sure your child takes advantage of the privacy settings on social networks.

- Remind your child never to post e-mail addresses or phone numbers.

- Remind your child that passwords should only be shared with their parents.

- Pre-approve pictures and videos before your child posts them online.

- Check your child's friend list to see who has access to his or her profile and make sure your child knows all their friends in person.

- Check the profiles of your child's friends to see if there is revealing information or pictures of your child.

- Teach your children not to respond to any e-mails requesting personal information and to delete e-mails from unknown senders.

- Create screen names and e-mail addresses that do not contain information about gender, identity or location.

- Teach your children that once they post photos or information on the Internet they can be disseminated by anyone and can remain on the Internet indefinitely.

Cyberbullying

Unfortunately, bullying has kept up with advances in technology and is now not just limited to the playground. Worse yet, cyberbullying can target its victims any time and anywhere. To protect your child from cyberbullying and the pain it can cause, try some of the following tips:

- Teach your child not to respond to threatening or rude e-mails, messages or comments.

- Take "screen shots" of any threatening or rude comments or images and save as evidence. Note the date and time of the contact.

- Instruct your child to block bullies from their e-mail, social networking and other accounts.

- If bullying persists on your child's accounts, delete your child's current account and open a new one.

- If harassment occurs through text and phone messages, change your child's cell phone number and instruct them only to share the number with trustworthy people.

- Learn your child's school's policy on cyberbullying and urge school administrators to take a stand against all forms of bullying.

- If harassment will not stop and you feel that something illegal may have occurred, contact your local police department.

Predators

The Internet has provided child predators with increased opportunity and the anonymity they seek when searching for their victims. If a child comes to you with information regarding possible predatory action, reassure them that talking to an adult is the right thing to do. There is no greater risk to a child's safety than an online predator who wants to meet in person. To protect your child, teach them what methods online predators use to try to entice their victims.

- NEVER allow your child to meet in person with anyone they first met online without your permission and attendance.

- Know with whom your child is communicating.

- Teach your child to refrain from talking about sex with anyone they meet online.

- Be involved. Do not hesitate to ask your child questions about what types of conversations they are having online.

- Make sure your child knows they can come to you if they see or read anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

- Pre-approve any photographs or videos before your child posts them online.

- Remind your child that people they communicate with online may not be who they say they are. Someone who says they are a 10 year old girl may actually be a grown man.