

## Safe Chat Guidelines



It's fun to chat with your friends using IM, in chat rooms and on social networking sites. But there are some risks when you meet new people online—especially if you don't know them in real life. Here are some simple tips to help you stay safe:

<p>➤ <b>Stick to monitored chat and messaging.</b> Select a reliable, reputable chat room – one hosted by a reliable organization. Age limits have been set thoughtfully for Facebook and other adult sites. Do not pretend to be older than you are. The experience may not be healthy for you. Your youth may even place you at risk.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Choose your friends wisely.</b> Yes, it's good to have lots of friends, but having too many can make it difficult to keep track of who views the photos and information you post online. Don't accept a friend request unless you're absolutely sure of the person's identity.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Protect your personal details.</b> If you are in a site or game where there are lots of people you don't know, use a nickname as your screen name. <b>Always</b> consult your parents before giving out your name, address, phone number or any other personal details. Learn how to effectively use the privacy settings on Facebook and MySpace to protect yourself.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Watch out for people who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage you to talk but say little about themselves</li><li>• Pretend to be your age or to have lots of things in common with you</li><li>• Are evasive about their identity or who insist on keeping their friendship with you secret</li><li>• Want you to share personal information</li><li>• Offer to exchange pictures</li></ul>
<p>➤ <b>Follow your instincts.</b> If you feel uncomfortable chatting with someone online, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Block that person from chatting with you</li><li>• Tell a parent or trusted adult</li><li>• Change your screen name</li></ul>
<p>➤ <b>Avoid flirting online.</b> You communicate your intentions in person much more clearly than when you are online. Flirting is a risky business. Be careful that you do not mislead anyone and are not misunderstood.</p>
<p>➤ <b>If you want to meet someone in person who you've met online,</b> ask a parent to accompany you. And if anyone approaches you online in an inappropriate way, make sure to tell a parent or other trusted adult.</p>

### Some monitored chat-rooms:

**Preteen Chat** for younger teenagers aged between 12 and 15, <http://www.preteenchat.net/preteenchat/>  
**Club Penguin Chat** <http://clubpenguincp.com/chat/>

## What Should I Do?

**Instructions:** Choose one of the scenarios below, or make up one of your own. Present the scenario to the class, and ask, “What should I do?”

Topics	Scenario Prompts
<b>Chatting Safely</b>	I accepted a new “friend” on FB who I do not know personally and now he/she has initiated a chat session. Should I participate? <i>What should I do?</i>
<b>Guarding Your Privacy</b>	I used FB to send my close friends an invitation to a party that includes my name and address. Now some of my friends have invited people I don’t know. All of these strangers will know where I live. <i>What should I do?</i>
<b>Asking, ‘Would a Real Friend Do That?’</b>	A friend is tagging me in photos that were taken last year at a party where I behaved like a fool. Now everyone I know, and lots of other people too, are looking at these photos. I want my friend to stop doing this but I don’t want to mess up our relationship. <i>What should I do?</i>
<b>Picking up on Warning Signs</b>	A person I recently met online has offered to send me a gift, but only if I don’t tell anyone about it. He/she said that it’s a special surprise just for me. <i>What should I do?</i>
<b>Asking for help</b>	Someone I met online keeps harassing me and asking personal questions about my private life. He said he wants me to confide in him so he can help me with my problems but now I’m not so sure. <i>What should I do?</i>