Safety Pledge

Keep Kids Safer Online

A collaboration between the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the White House to safeguard children online.

SafetyPledge.org

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Keep Kids Safer Online

As children spend more time on the internet, we must together pledge to safeguard them online, now more than ever.

While we continue to develop our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 and social distancing on child safety, we already know that more time online means more direct access to children, including for those intending to harm them. From online enticement to sexting and sextortion, it is critical that we combine efforts to protect children from online risks.

In partnership with the White House, NCMEC launches the Safety Pledge campaign, with opportunities to learn, share and pledge to safeguard children online in today's increasingly virtual world. These tools and resources come from NCMEC's decades of experience in finding missing children, reducing online exploitation and preventing future victimization. Since 2001, NCMEC has created a variety of free, easy-to-use tools for children and families addressing emerging threats to children online – from cyberbullying to sexting – with short videos, discussion guides, tip sheets and activities to help keep children safer.

With Younger Children

With Older Children and Teens

As soon as children begin using technology, parents and caregivers must play an active part in their online lives. Children should grow up expecting to have discussions about safe and responsible online behavior, and to learn new technology alongside trusted adults. NetSmartz®, a program of NCMEC, offers dozens of age-appropriate videos, a game, e-books and printable activity sheets that families can use to start and continue conversations about digital safety.

Check out **"Into the Cloud,"** the newest online video series from NetSmartz! Ideal for children ages 5-10, these short cartoons address important topics such as cyberbullying, online privacy and spotting bad actors online. Follow Nettie and Webster as they venture through "the cloud"!

Parents, caregivers and educators can learn more at **MissingKids.org/NetSmartz**.

Kids can watch, play and explore on the kid-safe site, **NetSmartzKids.org**.

Older children and teens likely already have their own set of digital habits, whether you like them or not. It can be difficult to allow them to maintain their online privacy and independence while also protecting them from online risks.

They need to know that they can trust you to listen and act responsibly to support them, if anything inappropriate happens to them while online, such as an unwanted sexual solicitation or extortion attempt.

Encourage older children and teens to be proactive about their online safety. Remind them to regularly check their privacy settings and friends/followers as a good first step. Better yet, engage with them in thoughtful conversations about topics like sexting, and how online actions can affect offline relationships.

Short videos like **"Your Photo Fate,"** complete with a brief discussion guide, can help you start these important conversations.

Learn more about emerging online threats to children, and get tips on how to talk about them at **MissingKids.org/NetSmartz**.

Internet Safety at Home

NetSmartz®

As adults and children alike have turned to digital tools for school, work, and socialization, **online safety matters now more than ever.**

Here are **five tips** for keeping kids safer online, adapted to fit the current "safer at home" environment.

Tip 1:

Keep the Ground Rules

Even if our online habits have changed significantly, you can still set boundaries that work for your family and schedule. Involving children in setting these rules may help them stick to the guidelines.

Consider:

- Distance learning tasks **before** social media or gaming
- **No devices** during meals
- At least ＿＿ **minutes** of non-electronic activities per day
- **"Digital curfew":** no devices after a certain hour

Tip 2:

Modify How You Monitor

Even the strictest monitoring programs and content blockers can't ensure that children are totally protected online. The best tools for keeping kids safe are time, attention and active conversation about digital behaviors.

Consider: Setting up **workstations** for children and teens that provide **quick visual access** to the screens for **easy check-ins** from parents/caretakers as they telework or complete household tasks.

Tip 3:

Engage with the Platforms

Take advantage of this time at home and online to get more familiar with the technology platforms your child likes to use. Taking a genuine interest in the games and platforms your child enjoys will help you better understand what your child is doing online.

Consider: If you're teleworking, **take a short break** to join your child on a round on the **game console,** or forward a funny **meme or video** you saw on one of the social media channels they use. It's a quick way to show you're willing and able to be **involved** in your child's online life.

Tip 4:

Chat IRL
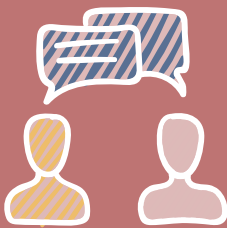
Chat "in real life" with your children. With our social lives being conducted entirely online these days, it's important to have face-to-face discussions about how children and teens are maintaining healthy relationships online, and to give them opportunities to also talk about anything unhealthy or uncomfortable happening to them online.

Consider: Showing that you're willing to **listen and respond calmly,** even if what you hear is uncomfortable or troubling.

Tip 5:

Don't Take the Tech

Taking away internet access because a child has made a mistake online rarely solves the problem. Taking access away during a lockdown would likely do far more harm than good. Beyond affecting a child's ability to complete distance-learning tasks, it would all but completely isolate them from friends and other family; a support system that is essential right now. Find ways to give consequences that don't involve removing online access entirely.

Consider: If you must, **limit access** (shorter window for digital socializing, gaming, restricted use to certain public areas of the house, etc.) **rather than** removing it entirely.
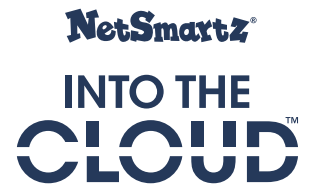
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For more resources, visit MissingKids.org/NetSmartz

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Using "Into the Cloud" at Home

Whether you're a teacher or a parent adapting to e-learning, "Into the Cloud" is an easy-to-use tool for discussing and practicing respectful, safe behavior in the digital learning environment. **Have students independently watch episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud" at NetSmartzKids.org/videos.** Then tailor the following activities for your specific e-learning platform as self-guided activities for children to explore introductory online safety and digital citizenship concepts. You can copy and paste them into assignment sheets, or talk through them one-on-one with your child – whatever works for your schedule and student(s)!

GUIDED DISCUSSION (GRADES K-1)

Start the conversation about online safety with them by asking if any of the below are OK to answer online, or if they should talk to a trusted adult before doing so:

1. *Enter your name and address to win a new bike!*
2. *Send me your brother's email password. I want to play a joke on him! LOL!*
3. *Click here to start playing your game.*
4. *Hi! Send me your photo so we can be friends.*

Then ask your student(s) or child(ren) about who their trusted adults are. You can give them examples like parents and other caregivers, but they can also be other adults like teachers, police officers, neighbors or coaches. Talk about situations when they might need help from a trusted adult, and ask them to name who they would talk to.

CHARACTER DRAWING (GRADES K-1)

After students have watched episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud," have them draw their favorite character and then explain to you and/or the group why they picked that one. Have them show the drawing on video, or with the help of an adult, take a picture or scan the pages to send them to you or upload them to the e-learning site.

VIDEO RESPONSE QUESTIONS (GRADES 2-5)

Have students independently watch episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud" at NetSmartzKids.org/videos. After watching, they should respond to the video response questions below for each episode. You may choose to have students work independently or in pairs/small groups online or on the phone to complete this assignment.

LETTER TO A CHARACTER (GRADES 1-3)

After students have watched episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud," have students write a letter to one of the characters, asking at least two questions about an experience the student and character have in common.

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Name _____

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 1: "Enter Badromeda"

1. Why does Webster go into the Control Room?

2. What are the Badromedan creatures doing that makes Nettie upset?

3. What types of people do Nettie and Webster suggest asking for help?

4. Describe the "human scientist" that Harold tells Nettie and Webster about. How does Harold know about her? Why might she be able to help?

Name _____

Attachment 1

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 2: "T.M.I"

1. What type of personal information is Zion sharing when he meets Nettie and Webster?

2. What does Zion say about online privacy at the beginning?

3. What are some of the reasons someone might want to trick you online?

4. What does Zion do to make his online profiles more secure at the end of the episode?

5. Which Webville Outlaw matches each evil plan for making the internet less safe? Draw a line between the Outlaw and their plan.

Potty-Mouth-Pete   Trick kids into giving him personal information

Look-at-this-Louie   Make kids be rude and mean to each other online

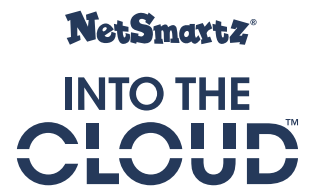**Wanna-Know-Wally**   Send bad pictures to kids with his Picture Ray

Attachment 1

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 3: "Rocket Bike"

1. What is Celeste's friend Stella's plan for dealing with cyberbullies?

2. What alternate suggestion does Webster make for dealing with cyberbullies?

3. What do Celeste and Stella decide to do about the cyberbully?

4. How does Nettie check that Ash is an adult who can help them?

5. Where does Ash the docent tell Nettie and Webster they can find the "Earth Scientist"? How will Nettie and Webster get to that location?
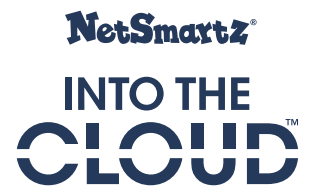
Name _____

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 4: "Fact or Fake?"

1. What happens to Webster that causes him to lose the map to Sector Seven?

2. What types of distractions were present in "Ad Alley"?

3. Why can't Nettie and Webster trust the information around them?

4. What does Nettie realize at the end of the episode that upsets her?
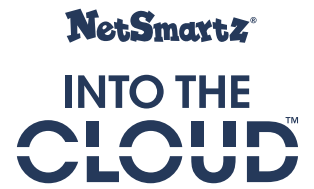
Name _____

Attachment 1

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 5: "Checking-In"

1. What does Webster do that causes him to see something inappropriate online?

2. What does Webster do after he sees the inappropriate content?

3. Why can't Nettie and Webster send a message to Clicky from the library?

4. What is the name of the Scientist who is able to send messages throughout the realms?

5. What do you notice happening in the NetSmartz neighborhood while Nettie and Webster are stuck in Badromeda?

Attachment 1

Video Response Questions

Watch the episode of "Into the Cloud" and answer the questions below. Remember to write in complete sentences.

Episode 6: "Finding Vera"

1. What does Renard the Biker say to Nettie and Webster to try and convince them to join his biker group?

2. Something about the bikers makes Nettie feel uncomfortable. What does she do in response?

3. What did Webster notice was strange about the bikers?

4. What did Officer Armstrong tell Nettie and Webster after they reported Renard to her?

5. What two stores is Dr. Vera Tas's laboratory in between? What's the riddle?

Name _____

Letter Template

Choose a character from an episode of "Into the Cloud." Write a letter to them asking at least two questions and describing at least one experience you have in common with the character.
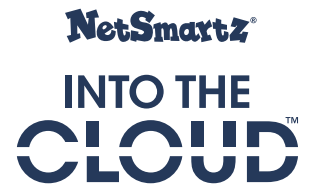
Dear _____,

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sincerely,

NetSmartz®

INTO THE
CLOUD™

Clicky

Webster

Nettie

Zion

Harold

Celeste

Stella

Renard

Wally

Pete

Officer Armstrong

Using "Into the Cloud" at Home

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INTO THE CLOUD™

WRITING PROMPTS (GRADES 3-5)

After watching episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud" at NetSmartzKids.org/videos, have students choose a writing prompt to address. Depending on grade level, the length and level of detail required for each written piece will vary.

Prompt 1: How did Nettie and Webster change over time? What lessons did they learn? Use at least two details to support each of your arguments.

Prompt 2: "Into the Cloud" has many examples of cause and effect. For example, Webster allows himself to get distracted and it causes him to lose the map. Find three other examples of cause and effect from any of the six episodes of "Into the Cloud" that you've watched.

Prompt 3: Create your own definition of "good digital citizenship" based on the lessons you've learned in season one of "Into the Cloud." Give an example of how to put this definition into action - how will you stay safe online?

Using "Into the Cloud" at Home

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INTO THE CLOUD™
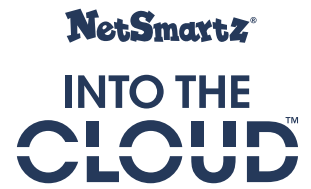
RECORD A VIDEO (GRADES 3-5)

Have students record themselves acting out scenes from "Into the Cloud" and share with you via email or e-learning platform upload.

Acting Option 1: Choose what you consider to be the "most important scene" of season one of "Into the Cloud." Watch the scene and write down each character's lines. With a partner/sibling/parent, assign characters and memorize their lines. Next, perform it!

Acting Option 2: Imagine that you are a new character in "Into the Cloud." Choose an episode and a scene to insert yourself in. Remember, you're a good digital citizen! What would your character say and do in the episode to help make the internet a better place and stay safe online? Choose an episode, watch the scene, and write down each character's lines, leaving room for you to add lines for your own character. Next, add your lines to the script. Memorize this new script with a partner/sibling/parent. Perform it for someone in your household!

ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION (GRADES 2-5)

Students watch episodes 1-6 of "Into the Cloud" and send their work products via email or e-learning platform.

Poetry and Song: In your preferred style, write a poem/song about "Into the Cloud" and good digital citizenship. You may send the lyrics/text to your instructor or record yourself performing the poem/song.

Be the Illustrator: Choose what you consider to be the most important scene from each episode (1-6) of "Into the Cloud." Draw each scene on a sheet of paper, leaving room at the bottom to describe what is happening in the scene and why you think it is the most important in the episode. With the help of an adult, take pictures or scan the pages to send them to your teacher or upload them to the e-learning site.

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For more resources, visit **MissingKids.org/NetSmartz**

"Your Photo Fate"
Discussion Guide

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As children get older, they begin to form peer relationships and start to explore intimacy and their sexuality. Today, this growth also coincides with having more opportunities for private communication through technology, especially cellphones. Young people are often uncomfortable talking to adults about their relationships, particularly when it involves technology, because they fear raising concerns will lead to caregivers restricting access to their devices. However, positive relationships with adults help and empower youth to make safe and healthy choices, both On- and offline. This guide will assist trusted adults in opening the door for age-appropriate and respectful conversations, specifically about the topic of sexting, an increasing trend in reports to school officials and law enforcement agencies.

LISTEN

Begin by watching the short video **"Your Photo Fate"** together. Next, ask the child(ren) for their thoughts. Start by listening only, without offering your opinion.

For example:

> **What do you think about the video?**

> **What did you like about it? What did you not like about it?**

> **Has this happened to anyone you know?**

> **Did the story seem realistic? Why or why not?**

> **What do you think the video is trying to show? What do you think about that lesson?**

SHARE

Thank the child(ren) for sharing their honest opinions about the video and their experiences.
Then calmly share your initial thoughts and reactions to the video. Conversations about difficult topics with youth are most successful when the child feels heard and does not fear punishment or judgement.

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DISCUSS

Below are some questions you can use to engage the child(ren) more after you have both shared your initial reactions. Follow the child's lead in terms of what aspects of the video or issues they want to discuss with you.

Sexting is the sharing and receiving of sexually explicit messages and nude or partially nude images via cellphone.

CHOICES

### What was the very first choice made in the video?

*Often the response to this question is that the first choice made was the girl's decision to send the nude picture. However, **it was actually the boy in the video asking her to send it.** Discuss specifically this decision to ask someone for an explicit photo, as well as the second decision about whether or not to send one.*

What were other decisions made in the video?

Other characters in the video made decisions to:

- *Share or not share the image*
- *Not discuss it at all*
- *Say negative things about the girl who was in the picture*

Talk about what to do if they are sent an image that was not intended for them, or when they know this has happened to one of their friends or classmates. The child may feel comfortable telling a trusted adult, talking directly to the kids involved or simply deleting the image from their devices.
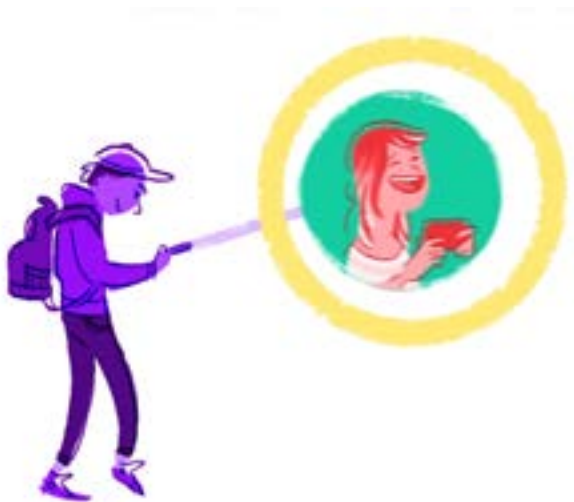
CONSEQUENCES

What were the consequences for the boy who asked for the nude image?

- *In the end, the girl was angry at him because the picture spread around school.*
- *A law enforcement officer came to talk to the boy – there can be legal consequences for requesting, receiving or sending nude images of people under the age of 18.*

What were the consequences for the girl who sent the nude image?

- *As the photo spread, classmates were talking about the image, creating an uncomfortable environment. She may experience feelings of anxiety or depression and have difficulty concentrating in school.*
- *Her little brother and her mother saw the image which was probably very embarrassing.*
- *It's also implied that someone she doesn't know saved the image. This could lead to harassment or other dangerous situations if that person is able to find a way to contact her (i.e., via social media).*

Emphasize that in the video it appears the boy receiving the picture did not intend for the picture to circulate around school. His phone was taken out of his hand by his friend. There is no way to be absolutely certain who will see your pictures – even if you send it privately to a person you trust. If you believe a child's nude photo has been circulated online, see MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow. Also let the child know that they can access this site themselves and share it with their peers.

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For more resources, visit **MissingKids.org/NetSmartz**

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS:

In a healthy relationship, should one person pressure the other to do something they are not comfortable doing?

In healthy relationships, both people respect each other's boundaries and do not force the other person to do something that they are uncomfortable doing or anything that puts them at risk.

What would you tell a friend who was thinking about requesting a nude image from someone else?

- *Tell them your concerns for the legal consequences they could face. Tell them how upsetting this could be if it gets out.*

- *Share your concern that images can circulate forever, even when someone tries to hide them*

What would you tell a friend who was thinking about sending a nude image to a significant other?

You could:

- *Encourage the friend to consider the possible consequences, including friends at school and even family members seeing the image.*

- *Suggest they talk to whoever requested the image about their concerns and notice how that person reacts. If that person becomes mean, aggressive or demanding, that is a red flag that needs to be discussed with a trusted adult.*

- *Discuss the problems with authorities that could come from sending an explicit image.*

APPRECIATE

Be sure to thank the child(ren) for talking with you about sexting. Ask them who they can talk to if they have questions/concerns/problems related to relationships. Discuss with them how to support friends who may experience pressure or negative consequences related to sexting, while also encouraging them to come to you or another trusted adult if they experience anything uncomfortable or inappropriate online.

For information about reporting and removing explicit content depicting minors online, go to **MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow**.

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PROTECTING YOUR KIDS
ONLINE 2.0

CONNECT

Set some ground rules.

Establish clear guidelines like what types of sites kids can visit, apps they can download, and when they can have access to electronics. Consider "blackout" periods that require disconnection.

Research before you buy.

It's important to learn about a device's capabilities before you buy. Will it allow unknown people to communicate with my child? Will this allow children to make unchecked purchases?

Go beyond safeguards.

Installing monitoring software doesn't guarantee your child will be safe online. Time, attention and active conversation are the best tools to protect them.

REPORT!

If your kids are dealing with cyberbullies or potential online enticement, report it to the website, cell phone provider, law enforcement or **CyberTipline.org**

LEARN

Know the platforms.

Online enticement happens across all platforms, so be aware of the sites, games and apps your children frequent. Ask them to show you how they use them.

Be proactive.

Teach your kids to spot common tricks used by online offenders. In NCMEC CyberTipline reports, the most common tactics used to entice a child online were:

- Engaging the child in sexual conversation/roleplay as a grooming method.
- Directly asking the child for sexually explicit images of themselves, or offering to mutually exchange images.
- Developing a rapport with the child through compliments and other supportive behaviors such as "liking" their online posts.
- Sending unprompted sexually explicit images of themselves.
- Pretending to be younger.
- Offering incentives for explicit content.

Spot the Red Flags.

A child who is experiencing online enticement may be:

- Spending increasing time online.
- Getting upset when he or she is not allowed on their device.
- Taking extra steps to conceal what they are doing online.
- Receiving gifts from people you don't know.

ENGAGE

Talk about it!

Your kids might not tell you everything, but ask anyway. Regular conversations about safety can go a long way in increasing trust and communication.

Get involved.

Challenge them to a duel. If you have kids who like to play online games, ask if you can play, too. When you respect their interests, they're more likely to respect your rules.

Don't pull the plug.

Taking away internet access because they may have made mistakes online doesn't solve the problem. Talk to them about protecting themselves and respecting others online.

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Gaming Safely

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Parental involvement is critical when it comes to helping children game more safely. Take an **active interest** in the games that your child plays and wants to buy; that means **doing a little research** on the game's rating, game-play style, content and age-appropriateness.

Know about the settings and capabilities for the equipment and systems your child uses. For example, many children enjoy gaming on a console as well as a cellphone or tablet. Many platforms have "cross-play" features where people can find and communicate with users across multiple platforms and devices.

Keep gaming consoles in an easy-to-supervise location and be aware of other places where your child may be accessing games, like a friend's house or community center.

Tell your child never to give out personal information while gaming. This includes talking about personal information that might be revealed in a screen name or gaming profile. Remind them never to agree to meet offline with someone they know exclusively through gaming.

Set rules about how long your child may play, what types of games are appropriate, and who else may participate. Use the parental controls when setting up the game system. Look for ways (like a PIN number) to prevent your child from changing the settings.

Have your child check with you before using a credit/debit card online. That means no auto-saving card details on the game console or device.

Check to see if the games your child plays have reporting features or moderators. Review these features with your child. Remember, you can also report inappropriate online interactions with children to **CyberTipline.org**

Start a Discussion with Your Child

- Would you show me how some of your **favorite games** are played? **Could we play together?**

- How do you **respond** if someone bothers you while you are gaming?

- How much do you let people **know about you** while gaming?

- **What kinds** of people do you game with?

- Do you feel **safe** while you are gaming online? **Why or why not?**

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For more resources, visit **MissingKids.org/NetSmartz**

Take the Pledge

I pledge to help safeguard children in my life online by:

- ○ Being a good digital role model

- ○ Checking-in regularly about their online wellbeing

- ○ Being open and available to questions about online life

- ○ Actively checking age-appropriate safety settings on devices

- ○ Learning more about online exploitation and how to prevent it

_____

Signature

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