CITY OF
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Internet Safety

The Internet can be a fun and exciting place, filled with learning tools and resources for your child to explore. Children who have access to online services, whether in or outside the home, enjoy learning about a wide variety of topics, communicating with friends and family by e-mail, chatting with other computer users, and surfing the Web.

Although the Internet offers many positive things, there are times when surfing the net can also be dangerous. Unless you take adequate precautions, your child might encounter material you find objectionable. Just as you wouldn't send your children near a busy street without some safety rules, you shouldn't send them onto the information superhighway without the rules of the road.

What to do first:

Set up a master account in your name and do not give your child the password. Windows XP, for example, allows separate screen name and settings for all the members of your family. Know your child's password and do not allow them to change it without your knowledge.

Place the computer in a room where the whole family usually gathers such as a living room or family room. This will make it easier for you to keep an eye on your child's Internet activity. Make it clear that if you can't see what they are doing, then they may not do it.

Talk to your child before he/she surfs. Let them know how to handle situations that threaten or makes them uncomfortable. Report any inappropriate conduct to your Internet provider.

Consider monitoring and blocking software. These programs can restrict access to objectionable material.

Establish a clear set of rules and guidelines for computer use.

Computer monitoring and blocking software programs are available both online and at major retailers. Different products offer various levels of parental input or control.

It is important to investigate each one carefully in order to choose the product that is best for you and your family.

Even with blocking software, it is possible that your child might come across something that you feel is inappropriate. Talk to your children about the issues that concern you such as exploitation, pornography, hate literature, and excessive violence so that they know how to respond when they encounter such things both online and in the real world.

Remember, the best tools children have for screening material found online are the values you teach them.

Please post the following near your computer:

RULES FOR USING THE INTERNET:

- Think

- Never give out your name, address, phone number, or photo to anyone you chat with.

- Don't tell them where you go to school.

- Never arrange to meet with anyone you chat with. EVER!

- Never respond to any message that is dirty, obscene or makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Tell an adult immediately and report it to your Internet provider.

- Remember, the world has bad people in it . . . and they have computers too!!!!