

Dear Parents/Caregivers

During this unprecedented time of isolation, it is more important than ever that we keep our children safe online as they continue their learning and socialise with their friends. Please read the information below to see how you can best support your children as they follow '**Mary's Way to Jesus**' while they work or play online.



Mary's Way to Jesus	
M	Make the Right choices
A	Always take Responsibility
R	Respect yourself, others and the environment
Y	Yes , to Jesus

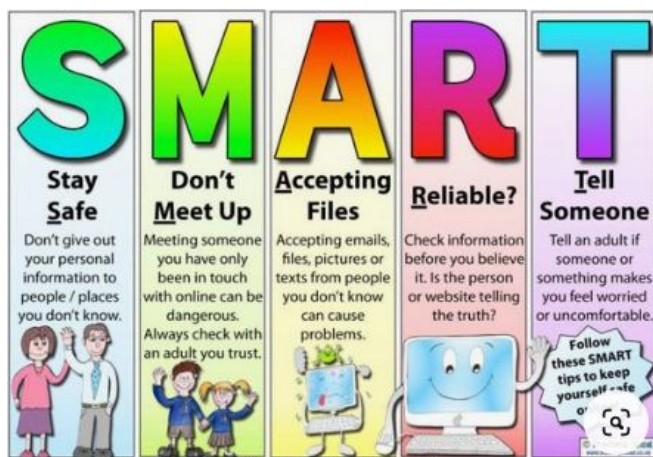


Today's children are often more savvy about using the internet than their parents. The internet offers children the opportunity to connect with their friends, research and learn, and be entertained. But using the internet exposes children to many risks.

Children can be exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to cyberbullying and targeted by predators. Children may share personal information or photos of themselves, without thinking or knowing about the risks. Parents need to be aware of these risks, especially during this time of lockdown in New Zealand and take an active role in monitoring and mentoring their children to help them stay safe online.

Here are some tips and guidelines to help you support your family and keep them safe online.

Click on this wonderful resource from Netsafe to support you when talking to children about online safety - [link](#)



TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN - MAKE IT A PARTNERSHIP

Agree on a plan. Your children will want to keep safe too, but may resent being told what to do, or being monitored all the time. So talk to them and work out a plan that everyone agrees with. This will make it more likely that your children will actually behave safely rather than finding ways to avoid you discovering what's going on.

Click on this link to support you with online video links which are child friendly - [link](#)

GET INVOLVED

Keep up with what sites your children are visiting and who they connect with online. If your children connect with others online, talk to them about how important it is to keep certain personal information private. Get to know who their online friends are and sit near your child when they are chatting online.

Place your computer in a common area. Having the computer in a common area, such as the living room, makes it easier for parents to pass by and keep in touch with what children are up to. A simple thing to say is 'If I can't see your screen, I don't know what you are doing'.

Talk about the online risks, and guide children about safe and acceptable internet use. Try to be calm when things go wrong so that your children will feel comfortable coming to you with questions or concerns. Netsafe NZ offers some useful tips [here](#).

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Be wary about underage children registering on social networking sites. For example, to be eligible to sign up for Facebook, children must be 13 years of age or older. From time to time search to see if personal details about your child are in public places online. Many children are accessing an app called '**Tik Tok**' and you are probably wondering what it is and whether it is safe for your child. Here is some more information about **Tik Tok** - [link](#)

Learn about privacy settings and talk to your children about how to use them wisely. Help children understand the dangers of giving out sensitive personal information such as phone numbers, address, or the school they attend.

Teach your children to behave well. Tell your children that what they say online has an impact on their real world friendships. If they are unpleasant to others online they can expect to be treated the same way by others.

Be aware of all the apps your children could potentially be accessing - [here is a link to a guide for you.](#)

USER SETTINGS/CONTENT FILTER

Block inappropriate content. Consider using parental controls in your internet browser or buying software that blocks or filters content. Some programmes allow you to block access to certain sites, or automatically blocks sites that the software deems unsuitable, or sites with inappropriate keywords in them.

Use a child-safe search engine. Some search engines are designed for use by children. Internet content filters like Google's **SafeSearch** filter allow you to change your browser setting to prevent adult content from appearing in search results.

PREDATORS

Never let a child meet an online friend offline unless a parent is with them. Explain to your child why meeting someone in person could put them at risk. If your child really wants to meet someone, go with them at least for the first meeting, and meet in a public place.

Young children should not post sensitive personal information or photos of themselves online. Tell young children never to give out information such as their phone number, address or the school they attend.

Warn children that people they chat with might not be who they think. Predators are expert at fooling people about their true identity. They may send a photo and say 'this is me' and use language that tricks your child into believing they are genuine. Encourage your child to share conversations with you so that you are aware.

BULLYING

Tell children to never share their passwords with friends. Friendships can sometimes end badly. Former friends could use the passwords and cause trouble. Explain to your child that passwords need to be unique and not easy to 'guess'.

Encourage your children to let you know if they feel bullied. Reassure your child that their internet or cell phone access will not be revoked. They are

more likely to tell you about bullying if they know that you're not going to take the technology away.

Tell your children not to respond to online or phone bullying. Responding may only inflame the situation. If the bullying involves someone from school, contact the school about it. If you have serious concerns for your child's safety, contact your local police.

Have a plan before bullying happens. Get together with your child to develop a plan for how to keep them safe.

Resource Retrieved **New Zealand Privacy Commissioner** (01/04/2020) from - [link](#)

Useful links:

<http://www.netsafe.org.nz/>

<http://www.hectorsworld.com/island/index.html>

<http://www.google.co.uk/goodtoknow/online-safety/>

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec04.pdf>

Protect your computer

Protect yourself online

Here are some useful videos for children to help them understand:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89eCHtFs0XM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6XunxJMcaE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMSHtE42mml>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVJtOphigFE>

May God protect and guide all our families and friends during this isolation period.

God Bless

Gina Benade

Principal

