

In the Winnipeg School Division, your child is protected from inappropriate Internet activities at school.

- All students require parental permission to access the Ior they may be disciplined if they do not follow these regulations.
- All Internet access on Division computers is processed through a main computer server that has protective software to block out inappropriate web sites, chat rooms and Instant Messaging.
- The Division may set up a secure chat room for special teacher-initiated educational projects whereby all communication can be monitored and divisional safeguards can be maintained.

For more information: contact your child's school or visit the following websites:

Winnipeg School Division Internet Safety
www.wsd1.org/internetsafety/

To help educators and parents teach children how to use the Internet safely, our Division maintains the above on-line resource. The following websites have been selected from this larger compilation.

1. GetNetWise—OnLine Safety Resources:
www.getnetwise.org/
2. Safe Passage: Teaching Kids to be Safe and Responsible Online:
www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/internet/safe_passage_parents/
3. WiredKids—Online Safety for Kids and Teens:
wiredkids.org
4. NetSmartz:
www.netsmartz.org
5. DatelineNetCrime—To catch a predator:
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10912603/

6. Winnipeg Police Service Internet Safety:
www.winnipeg.ca/police/TakeAction/internet_safety.stm
7. ChildFind Manitoba's Cybertip.ca:
www.cybertip.ca/en/cybertip/
8. FBI Library: A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety:
www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm
9. Family Contract for Online Safety:
www.safekids.com/contract.htm
10. Teen Safety on the Information Highway:
www.safeteens.com
11. Safer Use of Services on the Internet:
www.besafeonline.org
12. Disney Characters Teach Internet Safety:
disney.go.com/webtoons/today/index.html
13. STOP Cyberbullying:
www.stopcyberbullying.org/
14. ChildNet's Blog Safety:
www.childnet-int.org/blogsafety/index.html
15. How Instant Messaging Works:
computer.howstuffworks.com/instant-messaging.htm

Note: precede each website with: <http://>



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Winnipeg School Division

Internet Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging



Investing in the Future

October 2006

Using the Internet opens a universe of possibilities for children, expanding their horizons and exposing them to various cultures and different ways of life.

It also increases the chances of your child being influenced inappropriately from anywhere in the world.

Chat rooms and Instant Messaging can pose a variety of *unnecessary dangers* for young people using the Internet.

Parents need to know about these *dangers* and how they can protect their children.

Q. What is the Internet?

The Internet is a global network connecting millions of computers. A person who goes online is connected to a computer somewhere else in the world. The Internet includes among other services the World Wide Web, e-mail, chat rooms and Instant Messaging.

Q. What is the World Wide Web?

The World Wide Web is a system of Internet servers that supports specially formatted documents in a language called hypertext markup language (HTML) that supports links to other documents, as well as graphics, audio and video files. Users with software browsers such as Mozilla or Internet Explorer can navigate and view documents on the World Wide Web by clicking on the links or hot spots.

Q. What is a Chat Room?

The most common place for “chat” activity is on websites. They are easy to find and do not need extra software installed.

In a chat room on the Internet, people can type messages back and forth to someone else with

instant response — just like carrying on a conversation. Other people can log into the chat room and read the messages, just as if they were in the same room “listening” — only you can’t see them and you don’t know who they are.

“Chat” is probably the most dangerous area on the Internet because you don’t know who is in the chat room with you.

Q. What is Instant Messaging (IM)?

To use Instant Messaging you must download and/or install software such as MSN Messenger.

Instant Messaging allows people using the same IM software to communicate and transfer files through private online chat areas. With Instant Messaging, a user creates a list of other users with whom he/she wishes to communicate. When a user from the list is online, the service alerts him/her and enables immediate contact.

Q. What is a search engine?

A search engine is a program such as Google or Yahoo which uses specified keywords to search through documents to assist in looking up information on the Internet.

Q. What is a blog?

The term blog is a contraction of the terms “web log”. Comments on a blog may reflect one’s view on politics, music or an on-line personal journal. Children who create personal blogs need to be very careful that they do not provide information about their identity or friends.



To protect your child from inappropriate activities on the Internet at home:

- If possible, place your computer where you can easily monitor your child’s Internet activity.
- Teach your children that “talking” to someone on the Internet is just like talking to a stranger. The person they are “talking” to may pretend to be a kid just like them, but may in fact be an adult who could harm them. Block instant/personal messages from people you and your child don’t know.
- Teach your children NEVER to meet with someone they have received e-mails from or have “talked” to on the Internet.
- Teach your children NEVER to give out personal information (address, telephone number, school) or photos of themselves and their family in person, via e-mail, in a chat room or in any online profile. Be aware that when one enters a chat room or engages in Instant Messaging, one’s e-mail address can become flooded with unsolicited and inappropriate e-mail through “spamming.”
- Teach your children to inform you immediately if anyone asks them for personal information or suggests that they meet.
- Regularly ask your children about their online friends and activities.
- Maintain access to your child’s online account and randomly check his/her e-mail. Advise your child of your access and the reasons why you are checking.
- Consider installing software on your computer that controls and protects Internet access to specific websites, words and pictures and blocks personal information from being sent.
- Establish age-appropriate time limits for use of the Internet and then closely monitor your child’s Internet time.