INTERNET SAFETY

When we talk about internet we usually think of it as a place where we can learn, research, socialize with friends, share photos and moments of our lives or play online games. We don't think of it as of something dangerous.

But the internet can be very dangerous place for everyone, especially for the children and teenagers. It can be accessed from anywhere and anytime. We don't even have to leave our homes to find trouble. The computers, tablets or smartphones bring the world right into our homes. And there are all kinds of hidden dangers online.

Internet dangers

In order to speak about internet safety, I think we have to speak about internet dangers first. Let me introduce you tosome of **dangers at the internet** that we should all know and be aware of.

1. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bulling using internet and electronic devices. Cyberbullying is when someone bullies other on the internet with an intent to harm. Harmful bulling behavior can include posting rumors, threats, personal information or hate speech.

It is important to know that sometimes cyberbullying can lead to suicide.

2. Online dares and challenges

Online dares usually start as just silly and naive stunts that sometimes can cause accident. Over time the challenges become more dangerous. Some challenges can even promote an encourage suicide and self-harm.

3. Predators

We often get on the apps to send messages, share photos, socialize and communicate with friends. However, we are not aware that online there are predators who get on the apps so they can stalk children, taking advantage of their innocence, lack of adult supervision and abusing their trust. The online area attract predators because it allows them to have access and make contact with victims without drawing attention.

That is why we have to be careful of the amount of personal information we share on the net and with whom we share it.

We should be especially careful of anonymous apps with no age restrictions and with self - deleting or disappearing messages.

4. Privacy

We like to use social media and the Internet to connect and share with our friends. It's important to understand that anything we post online, even in the most private way, could come back later to haunt us.

We may post personal identifiable information online that should not be in public (like images, home address or family vacation plans). We usually don't pay too close attention to privacy settings, which can be changed or get bypassed.

It's very important to know that there is no "delete" button on the internet. Once you put something online it stays there forever.

Personal information could wind up in the hands of identity thieves, criminals or predators.

5. Inappropriate content

Inappropriate content consists of information or images that can be upsetting for children, materials that are directed at adults, inaccurate information or information that might lead the child into unlawful or dangerous behavior. Accessing inappropriate content is possible on any internet enabled device. Everyone can easily access it online whether they are looking for it or not.

6. Addiction

Internet is very addictive. Every one of us tends to spend more and more time on the internet, social media or other applications.

Video games can be addictive, too. What begins as a pastime can start eating up more and more time, as players try to beat top scores or unlock new achievements created for the purpose of getting players hooked.

Internet safety

Now that we've seen some of the dangers that are on the internet, we know how important is to protect ourselves. In order to do that we have to know **internet safety rules and what not to do online.**

1. Personal information

We mustn't give out personal information without our parents permission. This means that we should not share our last name, home address, school name, or telephone number.

2. Screenname

When creating a screen name, we mustn't include personal information like our last name or date of birth.

3. Passwords

We should make strong passwords and we shouldn't share our password with anyone but our parents. When we use a public computer, we have to make sure the we are logged out of the accounts we've accessed before leaving the terminal.

4. Photos

We shouldn't post photos or videos online without getting our parents permission.

5. Online friends

We mustn't accept friend request from people we don't know. We should always have our parents' permission when making friends online. We must never agree to meet an online friend without our parents, because sometimes people pretend to be people they aren't.

Remember that <u>not everything you read online is true</u>.

6. Online ads

Some ads can trick us by offering free things or telling you that you have won something as a way of collecting your personal information.

7. Downloading

Software andattachments sometimes contain viruses. That is why we shouldn't download anything without our parents and we should never open an attachment from someone we don't know.

8. Bullying

We should not send or respond to mean or insulting messages and we should tell our parents if you receive one. If something happens online that makes us feel uncomfortable, we must talk to our parents or to a teacher at school.