

# Important Message to Parents Regarding Your Child and Internet Safety

by Richard Cookson, Principal,  
William S. Cohen School

The Bangor School Department has been made aware of a website that has become popular among teens throughout the country, including Bangor. The website is intended to provide students with the opportunity to network in order to meet new people who have the same interests. This particular website is located at <http://www.myspace.com>.

Of concern, however, is the detailed profile sheets that students complete outlining their personal likes, dislikes, name, birthdate, address, school they attend, where they hang out and even photographs of themselves and friends. Some students have entered inappropriate text and images into their profile sheet. This information can be accessed by anyone with a computer and internet service. Therefore, children who provide information to the site are at risk of having that information viewed by anyone including those with inappropriate intentions.

While our school's internet education practices include alerting students of the dangers of providing personal information online, I wanted to inform parents of this danger so that parents can reinforce at home internet safety with their child. The following websites and the accompanying safety tips can provide parents with the information needed.

- <http://worldkids.net/schoolsafety/internet/>
- [http://www.safekids.com/child\\_safety.htm](http://www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm)
- <http://www.netsmartz.org/>
- <http://www.mcctf.org/InternetSafety.htm>
- <http://20below.maintoday.com/press/pph/050831internet.shtml>

## The 10 Golden Rules On Internet Safety To Share With Your Child

### 1 Ask your parents for permission before you log on!

*Read the Internet safety tips together with your parents, teacher or guardian. Let them know what you are doing on-line. Only use the Internet when your parents have given you permission and only for the time that they have allowed you to use it.*

### 2 Tell your parents to spend time with you while online.

*Show your parents your favorite places in the Internet. Tell them about the people you meet on-line and the things you talk about. Let them know of your keypals and get them involved in your on-line activities!*

### 3 Post your family's e-mail address even if you have your own!

*It's neat to have your own e-mail address but it is always a good idea to post your family's address and then inform your own address after you are absolutely sure that the sender is trustworthy.*

### 4 Do NOT give out your home address, parents work address, or school information. This also holds true for telephone numbers.

*If you are entering a contest, or registering on a new site, discuss it with your parents or guardians first and get their permission! Show them the site and the reason why you would want to give out your address. If you have a PO Box, use that as your address!*

*If you want to become "snail mail" pals with someone you should talk to your parents about it first, and get their permission to give out your address.*

### 5 You should NOT use your real last name while you are on-line.

*A better idea is to use your middle name as a last name, or have fun and make one up! If you do decide that you would like to use your real last name, please talk to your parents about it first!*

### 6 Never agree to meet anyone, anywhere without talking to your parent or guardian about it and getting their approval.

*People may not be who they say they are! If you do decide to meet with someone that you have met on-line, talk to your parents first. If they agree to the meeting, have them come with you and meet in a public place (where there is a lot of other people around)!*

### 7 Never give out your password to anyone for any reason!

*The ONLY people that NEED to know it already have it, no matter what they tell you!*

### 8 Don't reply to any e-mail messages if you feel that they are offensive, strange, mean or upsetting to you.

*Show the message immediately to your parents or teachers or any adult you trust so they may take the proper action or advise you on what to do. This is usually the best solution. Most of all don't imitate those kids that write rude messages.*

### 9 Don't send scanned pictures of yourself or your family to anyone unless you have your parent's approval.

*If you have a homepage, your parents should help you determine the pictures that you should put on it.*

### 10 Stop right away if you see or read something on a Web site that is upsetting or offensive to you.

*Some sites are not meant for children and you might have accidentally reached that site through a hyperlink. Talk to your parents or teacher about it.*