WORCESTER
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

STUDENT GUIDE TO USING THE INTERNET SAFELY

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The Internet can be a great place for you to research, learn, communicate, and socialise; however, there are also risks. This Internet Safety Guide will give you several helpful tips to help you stay safe online.

1. Personal information

   This is extremely valuable, and can be used against you if someone else gets a hold of it. Always keep it protected by following some of these pointers:

   - Never give your real name, address, phone number, the name of the college, or a picture of yourself to anyone online.
   - Don't share passwords with your friends.
   - Always "log out" of websites to which you are signed in so that your privacy is protected from the next computer user.
   - Beware of online surveys and quizzes that are often advertised at the tops and on the sides of webpages. They may ask you for your personal information. Many of those advertisements are written by untrustworthy sources.

2. E-mails

   Never open emails from people or businesses you don't know. Be careful about clicking links within emails as these are a common way of getting viruses or revealing personal information. Set your email settings to filter spam.

3. <u>Usernames and passwords</u>

   You often need to create usernames and passwords to register on certain websites.

   Username: A username can be anything you want it to be. You may not want to use your real name as this will help keep your identity safe.

   Password: You should choose a password that is memorable and not easy for someone else to guess. The best types of passwords mix letters and numbers. This is known as a strong password as it is a lot more difficult to work out. Never include your name, birthday, name of your school, or any combination of personally identifiable information.

4. <u>Advertisements</u>

   Beware of website advertisements, such as ads that ask you to vote for your favorite musician, or ask you to play a simple game to win prizes. You might be asked to enter your email address, which can subject you to spam or even *spyware,* which takes control of your computer and can get your personal information without you even knowing it. Downloading from an untrustworthy source could also subject your computer to viruses which do major damage to your computer.

5. <u>Safe use of browsers</u>

The most popular internet browsers enable you to manage your settings, including

allowing and blocking selected websites, blocking pop ups and browsing in private.

Each browser will tell you to do this in slightly different ways, so go to the security and privacy section of

their websites to make sure you fully understand, or the help area of the browsers themselves. Some

examples are;

Internet Explorer

http://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/security/pc-security/ie9.aspx

Chrome

http://www.google.com/chrome/intl/en/more/security.html

Safari

http://www.apple.com/safari/features.html#security

Firefox

http://www.mozilla.org/security/

6. <u>Plagiarism</u>

Plagiarism is when someone copies the words, pictures, diagrams, or ideas of someone else and presents

them as his or her own. When you find information in a book, on the Internet, or from some other source,

you must give the author of that information credit in a citation. See the college policy on plagiarism and/or

visit plagiarism.org for additional information about the topic of plagiarism. Many students might set up

blogs to share ideas for work. Be aware that if you post your entire project online, including your data, it will

make it easy for someone else to plagiarise your work. Posting a portion of your work would be a better way

to do this.

7. Internet Predators

   Never meet an online stranger in person. You have no way of knowing who they really are. Never allow a stranger to join a buddy list, a chat, or an IM conversation. Tell your parents, tutor or a trusted adult about anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

8. Social networking and blogging

   It's important to take precautions, because information from these sources can get into the wrong hands, and can even be viewed by potential college or job prospects. Consider the following tips.

- Don't assume blogging is private. It's possible for search engines to pick up the information you post. If you publish photos or links to private websites on your blog, you also reduce your level of protection. Check out your blog host's setting options to find out if you can turn off some of these features, and be cautious of what you post on your blog.
- Be clear about your thoughts when you communicate with people online, since the other person cannot see your face or hear your tone of voice. Be thoughtful with your words and consider how a message might be read. Treat others kindly online, just as you would in person.
- Social networking websites can be great ways to find people with similar interests on the Internet and a great information-sharing mechanism. However, never post private information. Once posted, this information becomes public and can be stored on the computer and Internet history files of others. Even if you remove the information or photos, they may still be "out there" and out of your control
- Never allow people to join your social network whom you don't personally know.
- Don't make your online photo albums public. Require visitors to use a password to view them, and don't put personal photos on sharing sites that do not provide security protection.

9. Internet Research

The Internet is a valuable tool for research. However, be aware that some websites are based on user-generated content, and aren't always as reliable as more traditional sources of information, like encyclopedias. Sites use techniques to move them up the google list which does not mean they are better sites to use. While the Internet is a rich resource, libraries are also full of helpful information.

Questions you might ask to help you decide if the site is safe to use for your research:

A, Is it clear who has written the information?

Who is the author?

Is it an organisation or an individual?

Is there a way to contact them?

B, Are the aims of the site clear?

What are the aims of the site?

What is it for?

Who is it for?

C, Does the site achieve its aims?

Does the site do what it says it will?

D, Is the site relevant to me?

E, Can the information be checked?

Is the author qualified to write the site?

Has anyone said the same things anywhere else?

Is there any way of checking this out?

If the information is new, is there any proof?

F, When was the site produced?

Is it up to date?

Can you check to see if the information is up to date rather than just the site?

G Is the information biased in any way?

Has the site got a particular reason for wanting you to think in a particular way?

Does it present a balanced view or only give one opinion?

H, Does the site tell you about choices open to you?

Does the site give you advice?

Does it tell you about other ideas?

If you have any concerns regarding your safety at College or on the internet please tell your tutor, teachers or Ruth Scotson (Designated Person for Safeguarding Referrals) ruth.scotson@wsfc.ac.uk

The Internet Watch Foundation campaigns to remove illegal material from the Internet. If you come across material that is illegal (for example, child pornography), you should contact the Internet Watch Foundation's hotline on 08456 008844 or go to www.iwf.org.uk/hotline

If you want to know more about keeping yourself safe online, or safety in general, visit 'Get Safe Online' for free advice https://www.getsafeonline.org/protecting-yourself/

These internet tips are taken and adapted from www.sciencebuddies.org , www.atl.org.uk and www.yhn.org.uk