

# Internet Safety

Tips for Youth



## Acknowledgements

Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick (PLEIS-NB) is a non-profit charitable organization. Our mission is to provide plain language law information to people in New Brunswick. PLEIS-NB receives funding and in-kind support from the Department of Justice Canada, the New Brunswick Law Foundation and the New Brunswick Office of the Attorney General.

We wish to acknowledge and thank our partners, the New Brunswick Department of Public Safety, Victim Services. Their expertise and dedication in the development of the materials was instrumental to the success of the project. We also wish to thank those who reviewed and commented on the draft materials including members of the New Brunswick Task Force on Internet Child Exploitation, and youth at George Street Middle School.

A special thanks to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection for giving us permission to use and/or adapt the resources on their websites.

The booklet does not contain a complete statement of the law in relation to child internet exploitation. Anyone requiring advice on his or her specific situation should speak to a lawyer or the Police.

### Published by:



**Public Legal Education  
and Information Service  
of New Brunswick**

P.O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, N.B E3B 5H1  
Tel: (506) 453-5369  
Email: [pleisnb@web.ca](mailto:pleisnb@web.ca)  
[www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca](http://www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca)  
[www.youthjusticenb.ca](http://www.youthjusticenb.ca)

### In collaboration with:



**Department of Public Safety  
Victim Services**

P.O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, N.B E3B 5H1  
[www.gnb.ca/publicsafety](http://www.gnb.ca/publicsafety)

ISBN: 978-1-4605-0383-6

March 2014

Aussi disponible en français

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Spending time online is a reality for most youth these days. The Internet allows you to connect with friends, use social media, watch videos, listen to music and much more. Although most of this activity is fun and safe, there are some dangers linked to the Internet as well. For example:

- Anyone can pretend to be something or someone they're not. Although you may think you are chatting with someone your own age, it may be an adult who is trying to exploit you by sending or asking for sexually explicit pictures.
- Photos or videos you post on the Internet or attach to a text message may not stay private.
- Sexting naked pictures with your boy/girl friend may seem harmless, but it's against the law for anyone - including you - to take, send or receive sexually explicit pictures of a person under 18 years of age.

This booklet can help you to know the law and recognize the signs of sexual exploitation. It offers tips on how to prevent abuse and get help if you come across something that makes you feel uncomfortable or frightened.





# Signs Something is Not Right!

No matter how you connect with others on the Internet, you should be aware of the ways that someone could harm or exploit a **young person under the age of 18 years**.

**Deceiving you:** Watch out for someone trying to make you believe information that is not completely true.

**Using pushy tactics:** This happens when someone does not respect your personal space or privacy. They may ask you questions that test your personal boundaries by making comments or acting in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

**Asking you for naked or sexually suggestive pictures:** It is against the law for an adult to ask a young person sexual questions about his or her private areas. It is also against the law to ask a you take your clothes off or suggest that you look at or touch your private areas. Taking a naked picture of a young person or asking you to send a naked picture is also against the law. It can happen on the Internet or in real life. This is considered child sexual abuse. When it happens online, you may hear it called "**Internet Child Exploitation**".

**Asking you to meet up for sex (or drugs/ alcohol):** An adult may use the Internet to try to get a young person to meet up for the purpose of sexual activity. Just because you agreed to meet up with someone, does not mean that you consented to sexual activity. When a young person has been sexually exploited, it is never the young person's fault, even if the sexual activity was not forced.



**Sending you sexually obscene material:** If someone sends you writings, drawings, photographs or videos of a sexual nature, that's considered pornography. It's against the law for an adult to communicate with a young person for sexual purposes or show sexual pictures.

**Lacking respect for your feelings and personal boundaries:** All people need to set personal boundaries and others should respect those boundaries. If someone you are chatting with on the Internet says mean and humiliating things about you or others, "unfriend" or block them from sending you further messages.



# The *Criminal Code* Protects Youth Under 18 Years From Sexual Exploitation

A few things you should know

- Children under 12 years of age can never legally consent to sexual activity.
- The legal age at which a young person may consent to sexual activity is 16 years.
- A young person under 18 years cannot consent to sexual activity with a person in a position of trust or authority over them. This is considered sexual exploitation.
- A young person under 18 years cannot consent to pornography or prostitution.

(See the booklet *No Means No* for more information about the law on consent to sexual activity in Canada).

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

It's illegal for you and your friends to send out naked pictures of yourselves. There could be serious consequences if you get caught. The police could lay charges and you might end up with a youth record.



## **Ask yourself these questions before you upload a photo or video to the Internet:**

Could the video/photo embarrass or humiliate me if it became public?

Could the video/photo affect some future opportunity – job, travel, school?

Could an Internet predator download the picture and share it with others for sexual purposes?

Is the video/photo against the law (i.e. naked pictures)?

# Playing it Safe on the Internet

Whether you are using your computer or cell phone or some other device, there are many ways that you might share your personal information online. This includes email, texting, participating in social media sites such as Facebook, blogging, instant messaging, online gaming, and using Skype, Facetime, or chat rooms. Unfortunately, your information may fall into the hands of people that you do not want to have it. It's important to think carefully before sharing information that's private.

Here are a few tips that might help you stay safe.

Consider signing a **Contract for Safe Internet Use** with your parents. (You can use the PLEIS-NB contract on the Youth Justice Website – [www.youthjusticenb.ca](http://www.youthjusticenb.ca))



# Tips for the Safe Use of Technology

- Don't send photos or video of yourself or your friends through Instant Messaging.
- If you decide to post your videos or photos on the Internet, choose a site that has a password and other security features. Put your security settings on high to help give you maximum safety. Don't let everyone see your profile. You can change this in the security settings on most sites.
- Don't select the auto-save option for your username and password—this increases the risk of someone accessing your account, including emails and personal information.
- Don't download files from emails or Instant Messaging without scanning them for viruses.
- Don't download files if you don't recognize them or they weren't expected.
- When playing games or instant messaging, choose a screen name or avatar that doesn't reflect your age, location, school, or interests. Don't use your real name.



# Tips for Uploading and Sharing Images

**Check with your parents before sharing pictures.** If you don't actually know someone, talk to your parents before you share personal information, pictures or videos.

**You can't get it back.** Your post could be on the Internet forever. Think twice before uploading.

**Look closely at what you are sharing.** Do the videos or information you share give clues like where you live, your school, license plate numbers, team jerseys, etc? Any one of these could be used by someone to try and contact you.

**Respect yourself.** The pictures you post online today may embarrass you years from now. Consider how sexy pictures might hurt you in the future if an employer uses search engines to find out about you when you apply for a job.

**Respect others.** Get permission from others before posting pictures or videos of them on the Internet. Never take part in cyber-bullying. You could really hurt someone.

**Share cautiously.** To protect your information travelling over the Internet, limit who can view your social media sites to "friends/family only".



# Tips to Stay Safe if You Meet an Online Friend

Lots of people make new friends online. However, you may find yourself in a very uncomfortable, scary situation with an older adult. Here are a few tips on how to be safe.

- 1. Take time to get to know each other.** Get to know this person better. Ask lots of questions. If the other person won't answer all your questions, he or she may be trying to hide something.
- 2. Always tell your parents or a safe adult where you are going and who you'll be with.** Check in with them at set times.
- 3. Don't go alone.** No matter how long you talk to someone online, if you decide to meet up, bring along a trusted friend or go out with a group of people. Make sure you meet in a public place where there will be other people close by, such as a restaurant or a teen centre. Arrange your own transportation and don't offer to pick up the other person or invite him/her to meet you at your house.
- 4. Trust your instincts.** If something does not feel right, it probably is not. Leave as soon as possible.
- 5. Be careful with your personal information.** Until you get to know the person better, do not give out your address or any information which would help someone find you. If you want this person to call you, be safe and use your cell phone number. People can find where you live from your home phone number.



# Getting Help

## TELL a parent or trusted adult

Tell a parent or another safe adult any secret that involves someone asking you to touch their or your private areas, or to take your clothes off. Always remember that when you feel upset or confused about something an adult does or says to you, it is not your fault.

## TALK to a guidance counsellor at school and get support from your friends

If you or someone you know is being abused online or cyber-bullied, talk to your guidance counsellor, a teacher or the principal about how to stop it. It can help to get the support of your friends when you are concerned about personal information that may be circulating about you on the Internet. Be cautious about sharing personal stories on the web.

## CONTACT the Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868)

This service provides free, anonymous, confidential and non-judgmental counseling and support to people ages 20 and under. **Kids Help Phone** responds to questions and comments over the phone and online. The website also covers a variety of relevant topics.

[www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/Home.aspx)

## CALL a Help Line in New Brunswick:

### **Chimo Helpline: 1-800-667-5005.**

Crisis intervenors are available to give you immediate support or refer you to services in your area 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For a better idea of the services they offer, check out

[www.chimohelpline.ca](http://www.chimohelpline.ca)

### **Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre 24 Hour Crisis Line at 506-454-0437.**

Anyone who has experienced sexual violence can call the crisis line for referrals and information. There is also confidential counselling available for women and girls in crisis.

## **REPORT the abuse to Cybertip.ca**

You can report the sexual exploitation and luring of youth under 18 years of age on Canada's online reporting website. [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca)

## **NOTIFY your Internet Service Provider**

Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) will have policies and protocols around blocking or filtering abusive content. Contact them directly to find out more about the tools available to help protect you online.

## **TELL the local Police or RCMP**

If someone you are connecting with online is making you feel uncomfortable, or asking you to do secretive things, like touch your body, you should tell the local police or RCMP. If you are in danger and need help right away **CALL 911!**

## **CALL the Victim Services Office**

You can get more information on support and services for youth victims of sexual exploitation from your provincial Victim Services Office. Look in the provincial Blue Pages of your phone book under Victim Assistance Services or check out: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/public\\_safety/safety\\_protection/content/victim\\_services.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/public_safety/safety_protection/content/victim_services.html)



# Helpful Websites and Resources

## Cyber Safe Girl

This site provides information to girls, parents and educators about how girls can be safe online from cyber violence, sexual risk and harm and sexual predators.

[www.cybersafegirl.ca](http://www.cybersafegirl.ca)

## The Door that's Not Locked

This Internet safety site offers an array of brochures, interactive activities, safety tips and guidelines.

[www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://www.thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)

## Internet Safety

The RCMP's website has lots of information on Internet exploitation of youth and tips for Internet safety.

[www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/is-si/index-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/is-si/index-eng.htm)

## Need Help Now

This site helps youth who have been involved in self or peer exploitation (i.e., "sexting"). It explains what you can do to remove Internet photos and get your peers to stop spreading your pictures.

[www.needhelpnow.ca](http://www.needhelpnow.ca)

## Respect Yourself

Raises awareness on the dangers of sending self-shots and videos to friends online. Uses real-life stories and cool downloads, to emphasize self-respect and safe boundaries for online exploration.

[www.respect-yourself.ca](http://www.respect-yourself.ca)

## Smartphone Safety

Highlights the risks that come with mobile phone technology, and offers strategies to combat them. It is co-hosted by Cybertip.ca, and links directly to their reporting service for the abuse and exploitation of children online.

[www.mobility.protectchildren.ca/app/en](http://www.mobility.protectchildren.ca/app/en)

## TextED

Lots of information for young people to explore, including discussion pages, an 'Acronictionary' with hundreds of text acronyms, guidelines for safe texting, and an ongoing competition for the best responses to inappropriate texts.

[www.texted.ca](http://www.texted.ca)

## Youth Justice NB

New Brunswick's own website for youth and the law.

[www.youthjusticenb.ca](http://www.youthjusticenb.ca)

# Internet Safety Quiz

**Is someone...**

saying things that make you feel uncomfortable?

suggesting over and over that you do something that you don't want to do?

giving you unwanted attention that makes you feel singled out?

scaring you?

asking for or sending you "secret" pictures or messages of a sexual nature?

inviting you to meet up alone to give you drugs or alcohol?

not willing to take NO for an answer?

If you answer **YES** to some or all of these questions, you are at risk of being exploited on the Internet.