## **1. Keep Your Online Identity Secret**

Don’t tell anyone your real name and address or what neighborhood you live in. Here’s the general rule: Don’t give out *any* information that a predator (bad person) could possibly use to find you. Even small things like what school you attend or the name of your athletic team is enough for a predator to learn your identity. You wouldn’t tell some 40-year-old man or woman you met at the mall your name and where you live, would you? So why would you tell *CoolGuy985 or HotChick16* from the chat room? Also make sure your usernames and profiles do not reveal your personal information.

## **2. Your Username and Password Belong to You … And Only You**

Don’t give your username or password to anyone. It's just that simple. What if a friend logs on and pretends to be you, and then says something really terrible and gets *you* in trouble? Sure, it might seem funny to the “friend”, but it’s serious and it happens everyday. With your username and password, someone can post language that gets you expelled from school, in trouble with your parents, or even in trouble with the law. Keep your name and password private. Also remember to sign out of your personal accounts on public computers and other devices.

## **3. The Internet has a Great Memory … So Keep Its Memory of You Clean**

Just because the Internet is so big does not mean that embarrassing or risqué pictures, rude or mean comments, or illegal activities will disappear forever. Monitor what you post about yourself or others -- or allow your friends to post about you -- because you may have to live with it for a long, long time. When you post content, think about whether you would want a future employer to see it. Even though it may seem unimportant now, it will be in the future and the mistakes you make now could follow you around forever.

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## **4. Be Good Online … Just Like You Are Offline**

Writing “hate” emails, hacking into other people’s computers, illegally downloading music or movies and making online threats are just as illegal on the Internet as they are in the real world. You cannot hide behind a screen name and get away with it. Watch what you write -- because someone else is watching what you write! Remember that what you say and do on the internet affects other people just as much as what you say and do in person. Online bullying is a serious problem and if you are the victim of online bullying or know about a case of online bullying, you should report it to your parents and the authorities.

## **5. Be Extremely Careful about Meeting Someone in Person**

Be very careful about meeting new people online. Make sure other people you know and trust also know this new online person. You should be suspicious of people you meet online. Anyone can say anything they want to even if it is not true.

If you do decide to meet the new person, bring your parents with you. All of you meet together in a public area like a shopping center where there are a lot of people around. If the situation feels strange, it probably *is* strange! Just like in the real world, trust your gut instincts -- and leave.