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**BROOKWOOD  
 SCHOOL &  
 INTERNET  
 SAFETY: WHAT  
 DO WE DO?**

At Brookwood School, a Pre-K through 8th grade elementary school, we begin conversations on Internet safety and media literacy in Grade 4 and continue these discussions through 8th grade. In grades 4 - 6 this typically means a presentation/discussion in the fall and spring, supplemented with discussions as issues arise during the course of the year. For example, bullying over

**15th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.**

The start of school is just around the corner and it is also the start of our "season" visiting schools, youth groups, teachers and parents. In anticipation of a new school year we thought it would be a great idea to focus this month's newsletter on the "best practices" for schools to address issues effecting kids online.



As always, we welcome your comments. We have a new telephone number for Children Online. 413-214-1225.

Enjoy your last days of summer!  
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Please contact Marje or Doug at [marjem@childrenonline.org](mailto:marjem@childrenonline.org) or [dougf@childrenonline.org](mailto:dougf@childrenonline.org). for further information on our consulting services.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR TECHNOLOGY & MEDIA SAFETY**

Children and teens in every school across the U.S. are, for the most part, living their emotional and social lives online. While most students are technologically savvy at a young age and may outpace their parents in their use of technology, most do not have the skills, information or resources to deal with the wide range of issues facing them online every day. Just as schools help students develop "life skills" and address

Example, bullying over instant messaging or other hurtful online behavior may necessitate more extensive time and education. Our 6th graders tend to have more time devoted to these issues than our 4th graders.

The seventh grade at Brookwood meets once each week with the curriculum centered around Internet safety, media literacy, and technology skills. We are using the new [Children Online guide](#) called "Safe Practices for Life Online" as well as supplemental materials.

In addition to 2-3 presentations during the 8th grade year, our 8th graders have a research unit about social network scams and privacy online. They choose one or two articles from a preselected group of topics to read. Once read, a group of 8th graders presents their "findings" from the article to the rest of the group. Each group then creates a list of recommendations for kids in general to live their life online. All the lists are combined into one "Best Practices" list which is emailed home to parents with an explanation about how the list was created. These lists generate

issues around drugs and alcohol, bullying, and conflict resolution, our schools need to begin addressing ways to teach children and teens to be media literate/savvy and to help them understand the many risks associated with online and text communication.

Some schools have not yet begun to tackle these issues or have little education in place to help students become Internet savvy and better protect themselves. Other schools have invited experts to come speak to their students during assemblies or community meetings. We hope schools begin looking seriously at creating long term curriculum around these important issues.

### **Here are some of the best practices we have seen at other schools or instituted in our own schools.**

1. Introduce Internet safety education early; as early as fourth grade (We do not recommend beginning Internet safety until grade four.)
2. Revisit and spiral skills each year from elementary through high school.
3. Select topics that are developmentally appropriate and reflect the typical risks and issues facing a particular age group. For example, focus on password and screen name education for 4th - 5th graders. Offer discussions with them around the question "Is it easier or harder to hurt someone's feelings online? Why?" With 8th and 9th graders, however, there should be much more education around issues associated with social networks such as scams, the meaning of "friends" and the fact that privacy is an illusion online.
4. Create units for developmental age groups with topics that can integrate with existing curriculum. For example, an English class learning 3 or 5 paragraph essay writing could choose a topic about life online as the focus of the essay.
5. Use quality curricular materials AND current events to teach Internet Safety topics. The risks and issues for life online can change frequently. New scams targeting children emerge each year and new technologies present new challenges.
6. Provide students with a lot of opportunity to discuss these issues. Students feel that the online world is their domain. They feel that they know it better than adults and are more savvy than adults. Give them the opportunity to discuss teacher-directed questions and selected issues.
7. Provide opportunities and a forum for parent education and discussion. The most successful Internet safety education

These lists generate great discussions at home.

Finally, our 6th - 8th grades have time set aside each week for "Personal Growth and Development", known as PGD. Over the course of the year teachers address many different issues such as drug education, bullying and issues specifically related to life online.

Parents are also provided with opportunities to learn about Internet safety issues and strategies for protecting their children and helping them to grow up in developmentally healthy ways.

Brookwood offers 2-3 parent workshops each year. We also periodically publish articles for parents in school publications.

Parents are encouraged to contact Doug Fodeman to discuss these issues or ask questions.

There is not one best answer for schools to address these issues.

Different communities and school cultures address this important topic in many different ways. We invite you to share your "best practices" with us so that we may include other ideas in a future newsletter. Please send your remarks to

MUST include parents. Some schools are considering such education a requirement of parents during the school year.

## INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Below are samples of already existing curriculum and materials on Technology and Media Safety.

1. [Safe Practices for Life Online](#) by Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe. The teacher edition is published by the International Society for Technology in Education. [Student edition is available at Lulu.com.](#)
2. Cybersmart Curriculum: Empowering students to use the Internet safely, responsibly and effectively. [www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/home/](http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/home/)
3. Powerful Passwords, [PCMag.com](http://PCMag.com)
4. [Stay Safe Online](#), from the National CyberSecurity Alliance, provides free and non-technical cyber security and safety resources to the public, so educators have the know how to avoid cyber crime. Specific resources for educators: [staysafeonline.org/basics/educators.html](http://staysafeonline.org/basics/educators.html)
5. [Identity Theft Resource Center](#) - Teen Resources
6. [Cyberbullying and Online Teens](#)  
Amanda Lenhart; Senior Research Specialist  
A report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project;  
June 27, 2007
7. [Pacerkidsagainstbullying.org](http://Pacerkidsagainstbullying.org)  
Pacer Cener's Kidgs Against Bullying was created by the National Center for Bullying Prevention and is designed for younger students. Resources include contents, videos about what bullying is, how it feels and what you can do about it.

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**DFodeman@Brookwood.edu**

[Doug Fodeman.](#)

## About ChildrenOnline.org

ChildrenOnline.org offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

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