

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES for Kids**

## **Staying Safe with Online Learning**

Before there was online learning, parents worried about how much time their children spent playing video games and what they were watching on TV. Now parents have the additional worries of them being online hours for class and class projects. Are they using appropriate sites to communicate with classmates and teachers? Are they getting the same level of education they would have if they were in a traditional classroom setting?

### **Computer Safety 101**

With everyone being on the internet for class and work, it is even more important to reduce your risk while online. Getting a virus that could destroy your computer is as easy as clicking or downloading something to your network. Make sure you have anti-virus/anti-malware software installed and up-to-date. The term "Malware" refers to malicious software. It's designed to run on a computer or a device to allow an attacker to gain access to or damage the computer without the owner's knowledge. Another important area to check is your wireless internet router. You should have a secure password and network name that you change when setting it up. It is best to use a network name that is not easily traced back to your family. For example, if your last name is 'Smith,' do not name your network 'Smith's Computer'.

Even if students are remote learning, there should still be adult supervision in place. Parents can also look into putting a parental filter or security setting in place to help monitor what sites their children can access. Schools should have firewalls in place to help with cybersecurity. A firewall helps best while at the school, however, it should still protect employee's emails while not in the building. It is best to check with your IT department to find out how their system works.

### **Online Safety in Schools**

Remote learning can include several methods of learning such as webinars, E-learning, live-streaming or downloading resources and materials. Each school and grade level will employ their own way of remote learning that is appropriate for the age of the students. Students may like the ease of simply logging on to complete assignments for class when they want. However, for students that have issues with

forgetfulness or procrastination, the online learning structure can leave them lacking. Each school district has their own policy when it comes to what can or cannot be shared between students and teachers. Teachers and students should not use the student's personal email to communicate. A lot of school districts require a parent's signature for pictures to be shared, where you can check with a school administrator to verify if your child is opted in or out.

### **Teaching Internet Safety**

A survey including clinicians, teachers, parents, and adolescents all came to the conclusion that parents have the primary responsibility when it comes to teaching internet and online safety. For youth, the best time to introduce internet safety is around the age of seven. It is always good to have an open line of communication with your children about internet safety, no matter their age. Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA) is a federal law that prohibits websites from collecting personal information from children under the age of 13 without parental consent. Children do not always understand that personal information may be used in a negative way or for targeted advertising. Be sure to read the fine print on educational websites to see if they are collecting any personal data from your computer.

One of the best ways to protect children while online is talking to them about cybersecurity. It is important they understand the risk and are cautious about pop-up-ads, not clicking on unknown emails, and knowing who they are corresponding with while doing online learning.

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