

Tips on how to safeguard teenagers in the world of technology

It is important to set boundaries around the use of new technology such as iPhones, iPads computers and internet access. This gives peace of mind to both parents and teenagers as both feel they are operating within safe parameters. So how can parents ensure the safety of their teenagers as they surf the virtual world?

A commitment by both parents and child is a good place to start. Here are some guidelines on how to safeguard teenagers as they enter the world of technology:



Trust and expectations: it is important that young people know their parents trust them. You trust that they will keep to the guidelines, failure to do so will have consequences. Let them know that it is your job to keep them safe and guidelines around the use of their iPhone or iPad is a way of doing that. Also let them know that they deserve this gift but it does come with rules and responsibilities.

Guidelines: make it clear when the piece of technology can be used and when it is off limits. For example, the computer stays in family areas of the house, the iPhone is turned off at night, and no technology is allowed in the bedrooms at night.

Responsibility: iPhones and iPads are expensive, make them aware of this and make sure they understand that they have to be responsible for it. So if they lose it or don't look after it properly make sure they know the consequences (i.e. they contribute to it being replace or repaired).

How it should be used: explain that their new technology is not to be used to engage in online bullying either through social media sites or texting. Encourage them to be a good friend and only post and send positive thoughts. If they cannot say something in person to someone then they should not be sending it to them!

No porn policy: make it quite clear that surfing the web for porn is not allowed. Also explain the repercussions of sending or receiving images of private body parts. Once it is in cyberspace it cannot be controlled or taken back and the affects could ruin opportunities in later life when applying for university or jobs.

Face to face: remind them to enjoy the moment and live their experiences to the full rather than be preoccupied with capturing them on their iPhone or uploading them to facebook to 'prove' they had a good time.

There is still a world out there: encourage them to put technology away for a while, take time to



look at the world around them, go for a walk, play games with friends, sit and chat. Remember human contact is still more important and ultimately more satisfying. Reassure them that they will not miss out if they don't alter their status for a day or check who has tagged them on facebook.

You are in this together: it is very important to make sure teenagers know that you are aware they might slip up and that it is a learning process for everyone. You may take the device away for a while, but you will talk it through with them and give them another chance to use it responsibly. Let



them know that they can come to you and talk openly about anything they might see on the internet or any messages they have received that make them feel uncomfortable.

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