

# Internet Safety



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Recently in school, your child was introduced to the **Zoe and Molly Online** safety kit (grades 3 and 4) or **Media Smarts** (grade 5); both are exciting new educational tools to help teachers and parents teach their children how to stay safe online. We encourage you to visit the websites ([zoeandmolly.ca](http://zoeandmolly.ca) or [mediasmarts.ca](http://mediasmarts.ca)), read the story with your child and/or complete the online activities. By completing these activities at home, you will help reinforce important safety strategies and ensure your child is better prepared to properly deal with difficult situations s/he may encounter online.

The Internet has changed the nature of games, and the interactive components of online games make them appealing to children of all ages. While it's easy for parents to believe that their child is safe while playing a game online, there are risks. Precautions need to be taken as most of these games have a chat component where children can interact with others in real time, and relationships can be quickly established. The activities will help parents and educators teach children how to stay safe online and will help educate them about the risks associated with sharing their information and sending pictures online.

The *Zoe and Molly Online* comic book (Sponsored by Shaw Communication) is based on a true case submitted to **Cybertip.ca** — Canada's national tipline to report the online sexual exploitation of children. It tells the story of a young girl who is being manipulated by an individual she meets online while playing a game. *MediaSmarts* is a Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy whose vision is that children and youth have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens.

We hope that you and your child enjoy the activities. Together we will help ensure our children's online adventures are safer ones!

Sincerely,

Anglophone School District - South

## At-home activities to help parents teach their children about online safety

### What can you do?

1. Visit [zoeandmolly.ca](http://zoeandmolly.ca) with your child to complete a number of fun activities, including:

- **COMIC BOOK:** Parents can read the story together with their child to help teach them about the risks associated with sharing their personal information and photos online.
- **QUIZ:** This 20-question quiz will test your child's online safety knowledge gained through reading the comic book.
- **WHAT'S WEIRD ACTIVITY:** While *Zoe and Molly Online* teaches children the importance of not sharing personal information online, it also helps them identify what constitutes weird behaviour — where boundaries are being broken by individuals who could be looking to exploit a child. This activity allows the children to play detective and determine the “weird” behaviour exhibited in the comic book.
- **CREATE A CHARACTER AND WRITE YOUR OWN ENDING:** Children get to create their own graphical avatar and choose a setting where the conclusion of the *Zoe and Molly Online* story will take place. Their character is then introduced into the story and the children are asked to write the ending.

2. Discuss with your child the importance of asking a parent or guardian's permission before sharing any personal information online. Discussion topics can include:

- Explain that it is important to protect personal and private information as the Internet is a public place.
- Explain that sharing information online is, for example, like posting it on a bulletin board at the grocery store for anyone to see.
- Explain that pictures are also personal information and that they need to have permission before sharing them online.

3. Visit the parent section of our Internet safety website ([thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)) to learn more about online risks and safety strategies. *When initially setting up any gaming console for the first time, be sure you are present to set up any parental controls and create passwords for the parental control features. You can also visit the Canadian Centre for Child Protection's Kids in the Know website [kidsintheknow.ca](http://kidsintheknow.ca) to access other age-specific, developmentally-appropriate prevention materials and educational programs.*

4. Visit [MediaSmarts.ca](http://MediaSmarts.ca) ; home to one of the world's most comprehensive collections of digital and media literacy resources to browse for information on questions that you may have about your child's digital life.