10 TIPS FOR PROACTIVE PARENTS
Re: ONLINE SAFETY

1. Be aware of who your children are talking to or chatting with online ... talk to them about how they're treating other people and the fact that the internet is a public, permanent place.

2. Don't be intimidated. The 'old' rules about fairness, good judgment and decency still apply. Example: If your child is getting text/email messages at 2:00am, that's not "how kids are today", so...it's time for a talk.

3. "Friend" your children when they join Facebook. This allows you to get a feel for how they and their friends interact online (which, by the way, is officially only for 13-year-olds and older, according to the terms of service).

4. Use monitoring software as a support, but not as a crutch. Such tools can filter out inappropriate material and keep tabs on who is contacting your children and in what context, but a determined child can find ways around it.

5. Be current by visiting online safety websites that provide great parenting advice when it comes to monitoring your children's online activities. Websites like:
   http://www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents
   http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents
   http://www.bewebaware.ca/
   http://www.cyber-safety.com/parents.html

6. Keep family computers in public places. This is an old rule, but a great one. In any realm, opportunity is a big contributor to potential problems.

7. Drill your children on the idea of their "digital footprint." The long-range consequences of online be-havior rarely occurs to kids. They need to know how serious this is. It could cost them a job someday.

8. Maintain access to accounts. A good rule*: For children to maintain phone and computer privileges, parents have the right to check in on what they're up to whenever requested.* What's put up online is, to a sometimes shocking degree, public information and should not be kept private from the people who care most.

9. Consider time limits. Learning to manage the Web's distractions is a skill that will help them not just to get homework done, but to function effectively in college and, believe it or not, at the workplace.

10. **Communicate. Do it early and do it often. Keep on doing it. Being safe in the digital world needs to be an ongoing conversation, not a one-time event.**