Screen Safety Information & Recommendations

- Check your privacy settings on social media and apps. These settings let you decide who sees your information and posts. Choose settings like "private" or "friends." These settings are helpful, but nothing you do online is truly private. Think about what you are sharing and who you are sharing it with.

- Know that the stories or information that is shared with you on your devices may not be true. Know that the people you meet through your devices may not be who they say they are. That's why it's best to only communicate with people that you know in person. Only accept someone as a social media friend if you know them in real life and trust them. A friend of a friend is not necessarily a safe person.

- Don't open emails, files or links from people you don't know in real life and trust.

- Don't meet someone in person that you met through a screen. The only exception to this is when a parent or guardian thinks it's a good idea and is involved.

- Avoid posting personal information like email address, phone number, home address, city, school name or plans for where you will be or like to go. Don't give this information to anyone you don't know in person. Avoid posting a photo with your house number or license plate.

- Use websites and apps that your parents or guardians are okay with you using.

- A trafficker or predator can actually spy on you through your devices. Anyone can create an app. When you download an app, the creator of the app gains access to you and your information. Protect yourself by using trusted apps with hundreds of good ratings. Turn off location, camera and microphone options in the device settings for each of your apps. Turn these off for all the apps that come with your device and every app you add. This provides protection from someone accessing your camera and microphone to spy on you. It also protects your location when you take a photo or post a comment. With locations turned on, a trafficker can figure out where you are when you take or post a photo or comment.

- Don't post, share or text photos and videos that show off your body. Only take and let others take photos and videos of you that you are okay with the whole world seeing. Once you post or send an image, you have no control over who will see it, even when you send it privately to someone you trust. If you are under 18, it's actually illegal to take and send nude images of yourself.

- Traffickers post and sell pornography online that was illegally obtained through sex trafficking. Sharing or viewing nude images or videos of individuals under the age of 18 or non-consenting adults is illegal. It's important to understand that some pornography is trafficking. To avoid unknowingly taking part in criminal activity, don't create, send, save or look at photos and videos of people without clothing. Don't ask for someone to send this type of image to you. Use a safe search feature when surfing the internet. If you see inappropriate images, leave a screen right away and tell a safe adult.

- Don't look at, make, send or post nude or sexually suggestive photos, videos or messages. This includes all sexting. Even an app that deletes images after sending is not safe to use since these images can still be accessed. Do not allow anyone to take this kind of photo or video of you. At your age, anyone who asks you to create, send or look at this content is not a safe person, even if it is someone you are dating or know well. Talk to a safe adult right away. Tell a safe adult if you receive inappropriate images or messages. Never ask anyone to send this type of image or message to you. If you request, send, post or save nude or sexually suggestive photos or videos of anyone including yourself, you may be committing a crime with serious consequences. This is especially true if you or anyone involved is under the age of 18, or the person in the image did not agree to the image being shared publicly.

- If you ever suspect that you encountered online child predators or trafficking, tell a safe adult. Your safe adult can use a cyber tip website to make the information available to law enforcement for possible investigation.