

Winter Break Safety Plan

FAMILY

A Family Agreement for a Safer Winter brings together the guidelines that express your family's values and expectations for navigating the digital world safely during the winter break.

Winter break is a time of rest, connection, and well-deserved fun—but also one marked by a spike in screen time, online interactions, and digital risks for children and teens. And with routines in flux and supervision patterns changing, a few upfront minutes to prepare a clear family-centered safety plan can make the online space safer, calmer, and more predictable for everyone at home.

This Winter Break Safety Plan is designed to help families set shared expectations, strengthen communication, and create a safer environment for children as they explore and connect online. It's focused on simple and practical steps that empower both caregivers and young people to stay aware, recognize red flags, and know exactly what to do if something online feels uncomfortable or unsafe. When we plan ahead, not only are risks reduced but trust, confidence, and healthier digital habits that last long after the holiday season are built.

Digital Safety Tips to Include in the Plan

Select a Code Word

Choose a simple and memorable code word your child can use at any time they might feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or need help—online and offline. This allows them to alert you without drawing extra attention to themselves or escalating the situation.



Review Privacy Settings

Go through privacy settings together on the platforms your child uses. Make sure accounts are set to private, location-sharing is turned off, and only people they know in real life can view or interact with their content.



List Three Safe Adults

Help your child make a list of at least three trusted adults they could go to if something they see online makes them scared, confused, or hurt. Remind your child why these adults are safe to talk with and how to reach them during the break.



Review Friend Lists

Sit down together and review the contacts or "friends" included in your child's accounts. Remove people they don't actually know or trust. Remind them that not everyone is who they say they are, even if they appear friendly.



Discuss Red Flags

Explain online behaviors that may signal risk such as: secrecy, flattery, pressure to keep conversations private, requests for photos, or adult-like jokes. Encourage your child to tell you if they encounter anything confusing or "off".



Establish Boundaries on Device Use

Establish healthy limits on screen time, bedtime usage, and device-free moments- like meals or family activities- together. Clear and predictable boundaries decrease conflict and promote safer habits.



Create a Tech Agreement

Write a simple agreement that outlines expectations for both caregivers and youth. Include safety rules, communication guidelines, and what will happen if boundaries are crossed. This creates shared accountability, not punishment.



Create a Calm-Down Plan

Create a plan your child can use when they feel overwhelmed by something they see or experience online.

Options could include taking a screen break, doing a grounding activity, or coming to an adult to talk about it.



What else would help our family stay safe online?

During your conversation, you may come up with other strategies that fit your family's needs. Write them here so everyone can remember and follow them.



So as you begin the winter break, keep in mind that digital safety is a conversation, not an event. This plan is designed to nurture open communication, mutual expectations, and a sense of safety among all in the household. In going through these steps together, your family gains trust, reinforces positive behavior routines, and establishes an increasingly safer online world where children are free to explore, learn, and have fun. May this winter break be a time of connection, rest, and peace of mind for your family.