

From Extortion Demands to Cloned Voice Scams, What Parents Need to Know About Keeping Kids Safe Online



From extortion attempts or threats to harm family and friends, to AI generated calls to family members, the variety and number of ways scammers stalk social media continue to grow. One extortion scam uses real or altered photos to threaten harm unless a teen pays up with money or more graphic images. Another uses artificial intelligence to clone a voice used to contact relatives and family members with requests for money. Across the nation and in our local community, online scams are causing physical, emotional and financial damage to youth and their families, and we encourage you to have a conversation with your child today about how to stay safe online.

Tips for protecting your children from online predators

Experts in internet safety recommend steps families can take to protect against online predators

- 1 Give careful consideration of the age at which you will allow your child access to a mobile device and/or social media accounts.
- 2 Be intentional about staying informed of social media apps and online messaging platforms used by your child.
- 3 Establish early-on that you will regularly monitor your child's social media accounts and messaging apps.
- 4 If you discover, or your child reports receiving, negative messages or sites, immediately shut down the site and confirm your child will no longer access the site in question, nor correspond with the messenger.
- 5 Remember that the electronic device purchased for your child ultimately belongs to you, and you have the right and responsibility to ensure your child is using that device in a healthy and safe way.



IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Immediately notify local law enforcement if you learn that your child is receiving any inappropriate messages in relation to threats of great bodily harm or acts of violence or sexually explicit material.

Parents should not engage or message anyone sending such messages, but instead immediately notify law enforcement on the agency's non-emergency number.



AI used to clone voice calls

Federal law enforcement agencies are now warning about scam artists using AI technology to clone voices, including those of family and friends. This technology can contribute to scammers succeeding in getting loved ones to divulge social security numbers, send money or share other personal identification information with strangers.

Tip for families: Decide on a word or phrase that can be used with familiar voices to confirm their identity.