



PTA HOT TOPICS

National PTA has a number of hot topics which it will highlight this school year. The Hawk Herald will highlight some of the most interesting topics throughout the school year. If you have any questions/input please email the editors.

INTERNET SAFETY

Parents a Key to Internet Safety

The media has recently paid a lot of attention to the alarming stories of children who have been seriously harmed by predators they first encountered through online activity, sometimes through the creation of a personal website. While such sites can be an incredible outlet for creativity and personal expression, they can also present serious risks if they are not critically monitored by responsible adults. You need to educate yourself about the potential dangers this access can pose and talk with your child about using the Internet safely.

Children who have their own websites need to understand how an outsider might view the information they post. Ask them to consider what a stranger would learn about them from the information they posted and how that information could be used to harm them.

You should periodically type all family members' names into a commonly used search engine to find out what types of information is posted about them. If you find that your child has created a website that you weren't aware of, take a look. You should let your child know that you are aware of the site, and that you will be monitoring it. If your child has posted personal or inappropriate information, you should have a serious and open discussion about it.

Your child needs to know what the rules are, why they exist, and what the consequences will be if they are broken. Above all, you need to reassure your child that if anything online makes him or her feel uncomfortable, you are the safest person to turn to for help and advice.

National PTA is a member of the Internet Keep Safe Coalition, which is a valuable resource for parents who want to learn more about Internet Safety. They are creating an Online Parent Resource Center, and they would like input on its design!

Reprinted from the National PTA Website.

Internet Safety Tips

There are many different software products available to help parents protect their children when using the internet. Below are a few examples of useful security programs.

- Safebrowse.com
- Cyberpatrol.com
- NetNanny.com
- Norton Internet Security
- Cybervizion
- Cybersitter.
- Routers may be used to control access and to have information e-mailed to you regarding visited sites.



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- Keep your computer in an open area.
- Use parental controls to limit access to dangerous sites. Purchase and utilize Antivirus, Security, and Spyware programs to control access.
- Set up clear cut rules with your child that forbid your child from discussing personal information on the computer
- Know your child's screen names.
- Monitor your child's use of chat rooms and instant messaging.