



## Stay Safe on "Myspace"

There's this song by Clem Snide that has the following lyric: "*We have a lot of things to say, so you'd be wise to listen good.*" This memo is for you if you, or someone you know, has a profile page on Myspace and/or similar web-sites. Members of the Senators Community Foundation and Peace Project want you to be safe when you're in cyber public, so here are a few tips.

1. Please avoid giving out your full name, your mailing address, your phone number, the name of your school, the nickname of the school's sports teams, where you hang out on the weekend, or any other information that could help someone determine your identity. The same applies to your family and friends.
2. Never ever get together with someone you meet online. Many experts consider this the biggest danger to your safety. Remember, people online may not be who they say they are. That "17-year-old boy" you're talking to may actually be a 38-year-old man who is a convicted sex offender.
3. Be very careful about the photographs you put on your profile page and/or in your blog. It's best to avoid photos that can make it easy for people to recognize you. It's a really bad idea to post photos that are suggestive or sexual in nature. Before uploading a photo, ask how you would feel if the picture were seen by your parents, a college admissions counselor, a potential employer, a future boy/girlfriend, or your grandparents.
4. Check to see if your blogging service has a "friends" list that allows you to control who can visit your blog. If so, be sure to allow only people you know and trust. Be very careful before adding strangers to your list and be extremely careful about the information you post that can be accessed by people outside your friends list.
5. Avoid postings that could embarrass you, your friends or family members now or later. Remember, what you post on your profile or in your blog can be copied and stored and could come back to haunt you years later.
6. If you allow non-friends or strangers to post comments to your blog, check the comments regularly to make sure they're appropriate and, if not, remove them. Never allow messages that are mean, threatening or embarrassing. Never respond to such messages either. Just delete them and, if possible, block that person from visiting your blog.

Source: Center for Youth Leadership