Educational Talent Search (ETS) has started a Facebook page (for grades 9th-12th) and a bebo page (for grades 6th-8th). Facebook and bebo are online social networking websites. The ETS pages are private and will only be viewed by ETS students, parents, teachers and counselors. In order to view our page, your child/ren will need to create their own profile page (unless they already have one). We will use our ETS pages to post upcoming events such as campus visits and cultural trips. Students will also be able to keep in contact with the 800 other ETS students in our program. We will also allow students to post their thoughts and opinions on the trips and activities that they attend. We will be monitoring the pages on a daily basis.

ETS takes the safety of our students very seriously. Therefore, we are requiring a parent or guardian signature before we will invite a student to join our group.

The problems encountered in social networking or other anonymous online communities typically fall into 3 categories:

1. ID theft, fraud and privacy abuses.
2. Cyberbullying, cyberstalking and harassment; and
3. Sexual predators, con artists and sexual exploitation.

Online Safety Tips For Parents

Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information. Being conscious of when and where it is all right to reveal personal information is vital, it is especially important when using social networking sites. A simple rule could be that your child should not give out any information or pictures that they wouldn’t be prepared to print on a t-shirt and wear into town.

Encourage respect for others. As in everyday life, there are informal ethical rules for how to behave when relating to other people on the Internet. These include being polite, using correct language and not harassing others. Make your children aware that despite the perceptions to the contrary, online bullying is easier to detect and trace than offline bullying. Online bullying can have more severe consequences for the victim because it is so difficult to escape from. Also because of the code of practice adopted by Internet Service Providers and mobile phone operators, companies are obliged to involve the authorities when illegal activity is reported to them.

Know your child’s net use. To be able to guide your child with regard to Internet use, it is important to understand how children use the Internet and know what they like to do on-line. Let your child show you which websites they like visiting and what they do there. Acquiring technical knowledge could also make it easier to make the right decisions regarding your child’s Internet use.

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Online Safety Tips For Students

Do know who can access your personal information – many sites allow you to decide which parts of your profile can be accessed by others. Assume that everything is public unless you are sure that it isn’t. Opting for private doesn’t always mean that only your friends can see your profile. In some cases it means that everything you put on your profile can be seen by everyone but only your friends can post comments or IM you.

Do trust your instincts - If it doesn’t look or “feel right”, it probably isn’t. If you find something online that you don't like or makes you feel uncomfortable, turn off the computer and tell an adult.

Do be careful with your personal information - The problem with posting personal information to the internet is that as soon as it goes online, you have lost control over who will see it and how it will be used. Pictures can easily be copied and shared with 100,000 of others at the press of a button. Because of the digital nature of the photos, they can even be altered or distorted. Don’t post any pictures that you wouldn’t want everyone you know to see, that includes your parents and your teachers.

Don’t assume everyone you meet online is who they appear to be - The fact that certain websites claim to connect students from the same school means nothing. The information provided by users when they are registering is not checked. Anyone can create a user profile pretending to be anyone else. Moreover, anyone regardless of their real or pretend age can join as many school communities as they want.

Don’t post information that could be used to find you offline – without meaning to, you can give away information that could help someone to find you. Be careful of posting photos with things like car registration plates or identifiable landmarks in them. Avoid posting messages to blogs along the lines of “I usually walk home down the lane by the railway tracks”. There are some people out there who will piece together little snippets of information about you over a long period of time.

Let's Get Started!!! To Create your profile page (if you don’t already have one):

Grades 6th-8th:  www.bebo.com  (Click on “Register”)

Grades 9th-12th:  www.facebook.com  (Click on “Sign Up”)

Please cut on the dotted line and return the signed form to us.

The ETS Staff will go over safety tips with our students in class. Please sign below to show that you give ETS permission to invite your child to join our bebo or Facebook group. Please send this form back to us in the postage paid envelope. After we receive your e-mail address, we will send you an electronic “invite” via email to join our group!!

Student Name: __________________________ School: ______________________

Grade: ________  Student Email Address: __________________________

Parent E-mail Address (if you would like to be invited to join): ______________________

Parent Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________