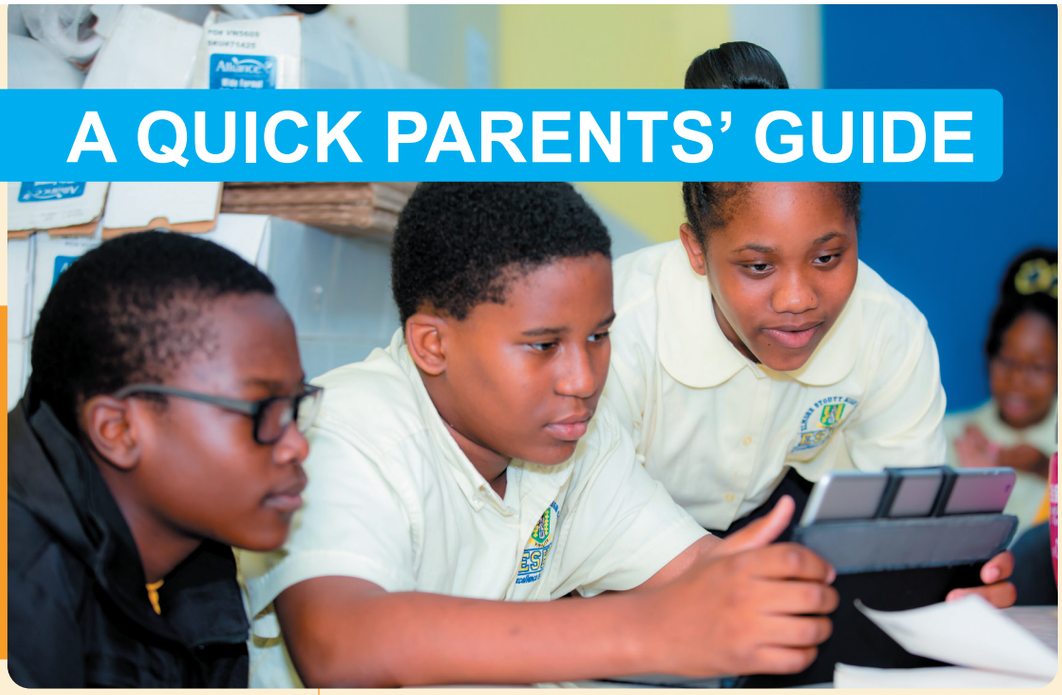
# A QUICK PARENTS' GUIDE



**Our children spend more and more time online. It can be a brilliant resource. But we need to help them to avoid the dangers.**

## Where to start

- What is your child doing online? You need to know. Ask questions.
- Let them show you how they're using social media.
- Try to keep devices in family areas.
- Remind them never to share personal information.
- Check the privacy settings on all their accounts.
- Are the sites they visit age-appropriate?

## Use parental controls

- These monitor what your child is doing online, block sites and set time limits.
- There are various examples you can download for a range of devices (Apple iOS, Android, Kindle, PC, etc). Some are options already built into the device.
- Look on the Internet for the ones that suit you best.
- **This site** provides a good overview.

https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet_parental_controls_0.pdf

## Beware of grooming

This is when someone tries to get close to a child online to sexually abuse them.

They may ask the child to 'sext'— send sexual material virtually (photos or videos of themselves) — or to meet in real life.

Discuss the risks of grooming with your child – they should never meet anyone they befriend online without a parent.

Contact the authorities if you think your child has been groomed.

## Cyberbullying

Online bullying can be teasing, abuse, sharing private information, spreading rumours or excluding people.
It may go much wider than real life bullying and be even more distressing. Other bullies can 'pile on'.
'Trolling' is a kind of cyberbullying where someone posts hurtful messages to get a reaction.

If your child is cyberbullied, they can:

- Talk to you. You're there for them.
- Ignore, block or 'unfriend' the bullies.
- Take screen shots for evidence and report them.
- Maybe come off social media for a bit.

If the bullying is extreme you may need to involve the police.

**Don't let your child stay online too long**

- Limit the amount of time your child spends online.
- Make a schedule together that includes family time, exercise, hobbies, etc.
- Look for signs of Internet overuse – e.g., disturbed sleep, anger when told to come off. Work with them to gradually reduce the time.

**Don't stay online too long yourself! Set a good example.**

Rotary District 7030

unicef | for every child