



FACT SHEET FOR LEARNERS

Every day people are hurt or injured in car accidents. But cars are not dangerous - it's the people who drive them that make them dangerous. Driving safely means knowing how cars work, following the rules of the road and being sensible and mature.

Using information and communication technology, often called ICTs, is very similar. There are many good things about using cellphones, computers and social networking. Most people find them fun and interesting. Teachers and parents want you to be able to use ICTs. But unfortunately, like driving a car, there are risks that go with using the technology. If you know how ICTs work and you follow the rules and use your head, you will be safe and in control, and the ICTs won't control you or hurt you.

Here are a few simple rules and guidelines you should follow. Mostly they are the same rules for 'real life' – no bullying or sexual harassment, don't give out personal information to strangers or meet with them, and don't do anything that you wouldn't want your family or friends to know about.

Don't give out personal information such as your full name, e-mail address, phone numbers, home address, photos of yourself or friends or school name – either to people you are chatting with online or by posting them online where other people can see them. You don't want strangers knowing everything about you. Never give anyone, even friends, your passwords, MXit PIN number etc.

Don't give out any information about your friends – except to your parents or guardians.

Keep your phone safe with you and make sure you always have airtime. Don't lend your cellphone to people you don't know well and trust.

Never arrange to meet with someone in real life who you have only met online. You don't know who they really are. If you really want to meet them, then ask your parent/ guardian's permission and ask an adult you know well to go with you. Never invite anyone you don't really know well into your home.

Don't confuse real friends with online friends. They are very different. Online friends might not even be who they say they are. Try to mainly have contact with people you know in real life. Try to keep your contact/ buddy/ friends list short. Be fussy about who your online friends are. Having hundreds of online friends doesn't make you a more popular person, just a more available person.

Know how to block people and use your privacy settings. If someone asks you too many questions about yourself, don't feel you have to answer. If you don't want to be friends with them, then block them!

Don't trust information on the Internet. People can lie about things or who they are.

Tell a trusted adult or teacher if you know of bullying, sexual harassment or if anything makes you feel anxious or worried. Don't put up with abuse or behaviour that you wouldn't think OK in real life. Save abusive message so that the authorities are able to help you by blocking the abuser. Report abuse to the service providers or administrators of social networks. For example, this can be done on MXit chat

Details



rooms by sending a "rat" command to MXit. **Click to PM MXit Team.** This command gives MXit the authority to check the 'conversation' and act within 6 to 12 hours of reporting.

Don't do or say anything online that you would be too shy to do in real life.

Anything you post online can easily be seen by many people - family, friends and even people who you would never want as your friends.

Chatrooms, such as those on MXit are moderated (checked) most of the time for abusive behaviour. Remember you can leave a chatroom, or just not answer or reply to a call or message. Staff from MXit or other social network sites would never contact you directly. So, for example, if anyone claims to be from the MXit Team, they are trying to mislead you. Block this contact immediately.

Be aware of people using cellphones, video cameras and cameras – especially at places like public change rooms or toilets.

Use your cellphone to get help.

If you are stressed or anxious or depressed, you can get help. For example, Mxit has trained counsellors from Childline to assist young people experiencing abuse. The Childline contact can be accessed via Tradepost from Monday to Saturday (2pm-6pm), for twenty Moola (20c). The user will receive a thousand messages that can be used to chat directly to a counselor. You should put emergency numbers onto your cellphone.

