

# Protecting Students Online

## GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL'S DIGITAL SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

Student online safety is an increasingly urgent topic for both schools and families. The expansion of take-home technology during the pandemic and the growing use of digital learning in K-12 classrooms means that students are accessing the internet far more often than in the past. While online resources can enrich learning, students' frequent internet use also raises concerns for their mental health and safety. Schools have a responsibility to create safe learning environments—in person and online. Parents have a role to play too.

This resource, a collaboration of education technology provider GoGuardian and National PTA, offers suggestions for parents seeking to promote effective digital safety practices in their school community.

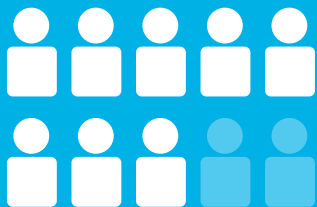
### Why understand student online activity?

A recent independent survey, commissioned by GoGuardian, polled nearly 2,500 American K-12 parents and educators to understand their concerns and expectations regarding student online safety. Here's what parents said.



Scan for full survey results.

#### 1. Safeguard student mental health and safety.



**80%** believe that unrestricted access to the internet can be harmful to student mental health.

**>88%**

support the use of online tools that help detect signs of students considering self-harm or violence.

Source: Morning Consult, 2022.

#### 2. Protect children from harmful content.

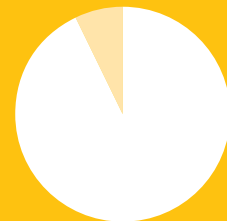
**71%**

have concerns about their child accessing explicit or harmful content on a school-issued device.

**92%** believe it's necessary to have online educational technologies in place to prevent such access.



#### 3. Keep students on task while learning online.



**93%** believe the internet is a useful learning tool that schools should use to enhance learning.

**90%**

say it is necessary to have technologies in place to keep students away from digital distractions.

## Get to know your school's digital safety plan

Clear communication among schools, students and families builds trust—and keeps students safe! But digital safety is a complex topic, making it challenging for many parents to know what to ask or recommend. Here, we suggest questions you can ask to open a productive conversation about online safety with your child's school or district. Asking these questions can help you better understand and evaluate the effectiveness of your district's online safety plan—and support changes where needed.

### Start a conversation

Begin by visiting the school or district website to look for publicly shared information about the current online safety plan and education technology vendors. Follow up with your school or district administrators for additional information.

**who** is the vendor providing the student safety and content filtering technology? Are they independently certified as compliant with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?

**what** types of data privacy protections do both the school system and the vendor have in place? What student information can schools access through the safety and content filtering education technology?

**where** will the technology be active? Will it be active on school-managed devices that students take home, school-based computers and/or school-managed student accounts?

**when** will the technology be in use? Will it be active at night, on weekends and during vacations?

**how** does the school handle student safety alerts? Which personnel have access to the alerts? What actions may be taken as a result of an alert? How does the school notify families about alerts related to their children?

**why** does the school believe this student safety and content filtering technology is a critical component of its overall student support and online safety plans?

**Schools have a responsibility to create a safe environment for children—whether in the classroom, on the playground or online. If we extend the same type of thinking about student safety to the digital learning environment, the task becomes more clear for educators and parents alike.”**

TEDDY HARTMAN, *Head of Privacy, GoGuardian*

