



February 7, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN HIGHLIGHTS SAFER INTERNET DAY

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today recognized 2017 Safer Internet Day and offered advice to parents and educators to help students practice safe online habits and to identify signs of cyberbullying.

Madigan said it is important for parents and teachers to talk to children and teens about their online followers and posts, and promote safety and respect on the internet. Families and educators can learn about safe online habits on Madigan's [website](#).

"There are many benefits to children and teens using technology to learn and socialize, but there are also problems and dangers that parents and teachers need to know about," Madigan said. "It is important to engage in a continuing conversation with children and teens about safe online habits, especially what to do if someone or something they see makes them uncomfortable."

Attorney General Madigan offered guidance to parents and teachers to help identify signs of cyberbullying. A student might be a victim of cyberbullying if:

- They receive or are the subject of mean or threatening texts, emails or social media posts;
- They become the subject of altered pictures posted online;
- They discover someone sending messages or posting on social media under the student's name; or
- They experience physical and social changes, such as becoming introverted or withdrawn.

Madigan recommended advice to respond to cyberbullying:

- Tell a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher or law enforcement;
- Ignore or block the sender because responding could escalate the situation;
- Report improper content and internet use to the website or internet service provider;
- Call 911 immediately if the child feels in danger; and
- Save or print all instances of cyberbullying by taking a screenshot or storing threatening messages in a folder that can help if law enforcement involvement is necessary;

Madigan's office conducted a survey in 2014 of over 800 Illinois students in grades three through eight to determine how they are using technology and social media. The results showed that the average child creates their first social networking account at age 10, even though social networking sites require users to be at least 13 to create an account.

Many students reported having negative online experiences. For instance, 45 percent of the students surveyed reported a technology-based interaction that resulted in an argument with someone. Additionally, 24 percent of students reported having an experience using technology that ended a relationship; 18 percent felt threatened online or got into a physical or verbal altercation as the result of an online interaction; and 22 percent of students reported not wanting to check their online accounts for fear of cyberbullying.

Attorney General Madigan's office provides training to students, teachers, parents and law enforcement authorities across the state as part of her work leading the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), which investigates child exploitation crimes and trains local law enforcement agencies statewide to investigate these crimes. Madigan's ICAC task force has been involved in more than 1,300 arrests of sexual predators, provided Internet safety training and education to more than 555,000 parents, teachers and students, and trained nearly 23,000 law enforcement professionals to investigate and prosecute internet crimes.

For more information or to access resources, please visit Madigan's [website](#) or contact the Attorney General's Internet Safety Specialists at e-info@atg.state.il.us.

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