## Parents’ Guide to Smartphone Safety

**SMART or SCARY?**

Smartphones are essentially little computers, so you might be a little worried when handing one over to your child. Take some time to understand the risks and implement a few safeguards so that you can help your child use smartphones safely.

### The Risks

- **Cyberbullying**
  With the constant connectivity of smartphones, your child may be more susceptible to cyberbullying or have more opportunities to cyberbully others.

- **GEOLOCATION**
  A GPS-enabled smartphone can reveal your child’s location through online posts and uploaded photos.

- **INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**
  With smartphones, your child has mobile access to content you may consider inappropriate, such as pornography or violent videos.

- **SEXTING**
  Your child may use the Internet and social apps to send, receive, or forward revealing photos.

- **VIRUSES & MALWARE**
  Just like a computer, a smartphone is vulnerable to security attacks if your child accesses unsecured websites and apps.

### 5 Ways to Be Smarter Than the Smartphone!

1. **Be a parent and a resource.**
   Establish clear guidelines, including time limits and consequences for inappropriate behavior, but be open so your child will come to you with any problems.

2. **Set up password protection.**
   This will keep everyone but you and your child from accessing personal information stored on the phone.

3. **Update the operating system.**
   New versions often contain important security fixes.

4. **Approve apps before they are downloaded.**
   Make sure you understand their capabilities and approve their content.

5. **Understand location services.**
   GPS features are useful when using maps, but you’ll want to disable location-tagging when your child posts anything online.

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For more resources visit NetSmartz.org/TipSheets

Lenhart, Amanda.
Teens, Smartphones & Texting.
Pew Internet & American Life Project.