

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SHERIFF RAND HENDERSON

## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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### MCTXSheriff Issues Safety Tips to Protect Kids Online

Due to the stay at home order, we want to remind parents to be cautious of what their kids are doing on the internet, social media or use of smartphone applications. The most important online advice for parents is to have an open and ongoing conversation about safe and appropriate online behavior. Parents need to remember no matter what app your child has, a majority of them have messaging capabilities and tracking capabilities therefore it is next to impossible to give a complete list of apps that parents need to monitor.

Here are some other helpful tips and advice to consider:

- Educate yourself about the websites, software, games, and apps that your child uses.
- Check their social media, gaming profiles and posts. Have conversations about what is appropriate to say or share. Set up your own accounts on social media and follow/friend your children.
- Explain to your kids that once images and comments are posted online, they can be shared with anyone and they never truly disappear.
- Make sure your kids use privacy settings to restrict access to their online profiles.
- Tell your children to be extremely wary when communicating with anyone they don't know. Check their settings on games and/or phones and block permissions if necessary.
- Encourage kids to choose appropriate screen names and to create strong passwords. Know your children's passwords and usernames, and periodically check for any changes.
- Make it a rule with your kids that they cannot arrange to meet up with someone they met online without your knowledge and supervision. Emphasize the dangers that come along with breaking this rule.
- If possible, have their computer, tablet, gaming system etc in a safe place in the house that you can see at all times. ie. the kitchen, living room, office or dining room.
- Stress to your children that making any kind of threat online—even if they think it's a joke—is a crime.
- Report any inappropriate contact between an adult and your child to the site they are using and to law enforcement immediately.

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