



**COVID-19, the cause for school closings, has created an increase in online activity as a key source of education and entertainment for children. It is likely that more online postings and participation in online forums will occur. This online social interaction may create more opportunity for predators to exploit the internet and target children. Parental supervision, open discussions about internet safety, active monitoring, and privacy settings will reduce the chance of victimization from child predators.**

## Future Impact:

Posts to social media and other platforms are truly out there FOREVER.

Social Media activity can be used by School Resource Officers to identify violations of school policy or infractions of law, to include sextortion.

Once an image is sent, the power of the image is no longer in your control.

## What to do for ANY attempted child exploitation:

• If a child is engaged in an inappropriate conversation with an adult, preserve the data by placing the device in airplane mode and DO NOT delete anything.

• Report the incident to **HSI Buffalo** by calling **(716) 464-5900** or **1-800-973-2867**

## Online Resources:

<https://www.netsmartzkids.org/>

<https://www.icactaskforce.org/Pages/InternetSafety.aspx>

<https://www.ice.gov/topics/iGuardians>

## HSI BUFFALO INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Purchase monitoring technology.** Every cellphone provider has products for purchase that will allow parents to monitor devices, physically track, and shut down the devices remotely.
- **Avoid using the child's name, age, date of birth, or any variation of these for user names or e-mail accounts.** This will help eliminate identifiers indicating the user is a minor. Avoid profile images of children.
- **Regulate your child's internet use.** Set rules of behavior and shut down devices at certain times. Set limits on internet use to give children an opportunity for a mental reset.
- **Educate your child on social media manners, behaviors, and the dangers of interacting with unknown people.**
- **Never talk directly to a predator.** Contact HSI Buffalo at (716) 464-5900 or your local police department for guidance.
- **Talk about online activities routinely for continued awareness of your child's interactions.**
- **Spot check activity.** Monitor and be aware of what your children are discussing online to include conflict and comments.
- **Implement privacy controls and parental settings on any social media platform your children use.** Set profiles to private; make posts only visible to friends/followers. 