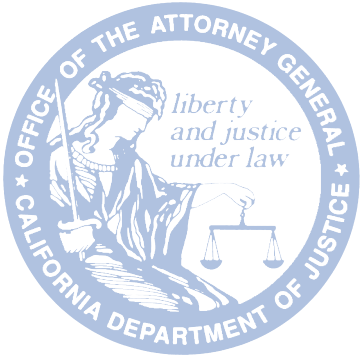




Getting Smart About Smartphones: *Tips for Parents*

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That is one powerful device in your child's hand. Any smartphone can take a child anywhere on the web, at any time. No wonder many parents worry.

We have good news. You can guide your children (and their friends!) in the safer use of smartphones. This straight-talk information sheet will get you started.

Please remember, your children learn the most from watching you. Visit the Attorney General's Getting Smart About Smartphones: Tips for Consumers and build strong safety skills today.

☒ **Setting the "Rules"**

Carry on regular conversations about smartphone safety with your kids. When you learn something new about settings or apps, share it with them. Invite them to share their discoveries with you. At the same time, have a bottom line. Set some rules for your child's smartphone use.

- **Rule 1:** Your phone is a computer – treat it like one. That means protect it from thieves and from hackers.
- **Rule 2:** Do not respond to texts or other messages that ask for your personal information. Your personal information includes your age, your address, your school, and your location.
- **Rule 3:** Do not download "free" games, screen savers, or other stuff without checking with your parents. These can carry malware that can harm your phone (which is a computer, remember?) These can also take information from your phone, including pictures and your friends' contact information.

- **Rule 4:** Do not open an attachment or click on a link in an email or text message if you are not sure what it is or who sent it. The attachment or link might also have an icky "virus" that puts bugs in your phone.

☒ **Apps**

Apps can extract personal information from smartphones...and kids love apps.

You can stop personal information leaks and give your children more safety skills at the same time. Look at the smartphone together and collaborate on weeding out apps that are not clear about their privacy practices.

Screening Apps

- On your own, review the apps your kids use or want to use. Look for a privacy policy to learn what information the app would collect and use. Federal law requires web sites and online services like mobile apps that are directed to children to get parental consent before they collect personal information from children under the age of 13.¹

- In the app store/platform, read reviews of apps. Learn what other users say about the app to see if there are any known issues or concerns.
- Common Sense Media rates apps for age-appropriateness. They also provide information on privacy and security.

Controlling Apps

You can take some control over your child's access to mobile apps.

- If you have an Apple device such as an iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad, use the Restrictions settings. Go to Settings, then General and click on Restrictions. This lets parents prevent kids from installing or deleting apps, making in-app purchases, and accessing the Internet and certain other features.
- If you use an Android phone, consider using an app blocker to stop children from using apps without your permission.

Reporting Apps

California law requires apps to have a privacy policy.² If you can't find an app's privacy policy or if you have a complaint about the app's privacy practices, report it.

- For apps in the Microsoft Windows store: Look for a link labeled "Report app to Microsoft" or "Report concern to Microsoft."

- For apps in the Apple AppStore: Go to www.apple.com/privacy/contact/.
- For apps in GooglePlay: Visit the app's description page to "Flag as inappropriate" or go to <https://support.google.com/googleplay/android-developer/contact/takedown>.
- For apps in BlackBerry World: Send an email to privacyoffice@rim.com.
- Report to the California Attorney General: www.oag.ca.gov/contact/consumer-complaint-against-business-or-company

For More Information

App Blockers: NetNanny, available at www.netnanny.com/mobile, AppLock and Smart AppLock, both available in the GooglePlay store.

App Reviews, Common Sense Media, available at www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews

"Kids' Privacy: Know Your COPPA Rights," Federal Trade Commission, available at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-kids-privacy

"Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online," Federal Trade Commission, available at www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0001.pdf

Smartphone Security Checker, Federal Communications Commission, www.fcc.gov/smartphone-security

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NOTES

¹ The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act also gives parents the right to review information collected from their children under 13. For more on the law, see www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-kids-privacy.

² The California Online Privacy Protection Act, Business and Professions Code §§ 22575-22579.