

Online Safety for High School Students

Apps & Texting Guidance

Apps and texting make it easy to stay in touch with people at home and your new friends and family. Students' use of mobile devices, laptops, computers, and general online activity may be monitored by your school, host family, Internet Service Provider, and law enforcement. Below are some best practices:

← Youth Programs Division

Learning who to trust online when you are participating in an exchange program can be difficult. If a stranger reaches out to you and you do not recognize a name, always ask your placement organization or recruiting organization representatives before you message them back. Never post your own or your host family's contact information online or share it with strangers you meet online. This includes email addresses, home or cell phone number(s), physical street address, or mailing address.

How can I detect inappropriate online communication?

If someone discusses kisses, cuddling, touching, massages, or requests to see pictures of you with little or no clothing on your body. This is inappropriate. Please report it immediately.

If someone uses language that is derogatory or shows aggression towards individuals or groups of people.

If someone shares violent, graphic, or otherwise offensive images.

If you receive anything like this from anyone during your online interactions on program, please let your local coordinator, placement organization, or recruiting organization know as soon as possible. You can also write to us directly at participantmonitor@state.gov.

Be careful about what you write and post. Do not send, post, text, or store pictures of yourself or anyone else (such as another student) if the person in the picture is naked or not fully clothed.

If you create, send, or receive sexually explicit images of a minor, under current federal and U.S. state laws, it could be considered child pornography and is illegal.

Sexting is strictly prohibited on program. Sexting is "the sending of sexually explicit photographs, videos or messages via mobile or digital device." Participating in sexting can lead to serious legal consequences including prosecution.

**For further assistance or more information, contact:
participantmonitor@state.gov**

