

The increased use of computers in all aspects of daily life from online shopping to virtual learning means that online safety awareness is more important than ever. Practicing online safety will help keep your personal information out of the hands of unauthorized and malicious users. Here are some ways your personal information can be put at risk and how to mitigate the risk.

Phishing predominantly happens over e-mail. In a not-so-subtle phishing attempt, you might receive an email requesting personal information because you have won a gift. In more subtle attempts, the email would appear to be sent from a legitimate sender or even someone you know, and a link is usually included. By clicking on the link you end up making yourself vulnerable. To avoid falling prey to phishing, verify the sender's email address and do not click on shortened links. Even if you need to submit personal information to a verified sender, log on to the sender's portal outside of the email shortcuts to prevent any vulnerability to identity theft.

Hackers can easily break into accounts with weak passwords, which is why having a strong password to protect your information is vital. Avoid using common English words, phrases, and common names. Preferably use a combination of upper and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters.

Know the difference between secure (HTTPS) and non-secure (HTTP) sites. The non-secure sites do not protect the users' information. Any information or details input into a non-secure site make the user vulnerable to identity theft.

Common Sense Education's Digital Citizenship Curriculum provides [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) for Grades K – to help students learn foundational skills for protecting themselves online. In today's digital landscape, cybersecurity has become an indispensable skill set for students. As they navigate the online world, it's crucial for them to learn how to protect themselves, their peers, and their school from digital threats. This collection of lessons introduces students to fundamental cybersecurity concepts, empowering them to safeguard against dangers such as phishing and unsafe websites and preparing them for the challenges they may face in our increasingly interconnected world.