

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> June 1, 2011
	<b>Section 14:</b> Social Networking And Internet Usage	<b>Version:</b> 1

<b>STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will protect the confidentiality and safety of each child who has been removed from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian and is under the care and supervision of DCS.

A child age 13 or older under the care and supervision of DCS who has been removed from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian may be permitted to use the internet for [social networking](#) purposes. The child will be appropriately supervised by the resource parent(s) and/or residential facility when using the internet on any form of technology with internet capabilities (e.g., desk top computer, laptop, cellular phone, iPad, or iPod touch).

A child under the care and supervision of DCS who has been removed from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian may not be pictured, described and/or identified as a foster child in [public/mass media](#) for any purpose, including recruitment, resource parent education, and public awareness without the consent of DCS. DCS will consent only if the following apply:

1. DCS has determined that such exposure will not be harmful to the child and will not result in exploitation of the child;
2. The child’s parent, guardian, or custodian has signed a release;

**Note:** If Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has been finalized, the release is not required.

3. The child if age 13 or older, has given written permission; and
4. The resource parent(s) and/or residential facility agree to utilize privacy settings to restrict the general public from viewing profiles or internet sites.

Code References:

N/A

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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The Family Case Manager (FCM) will ensure:

1. Parental and child consent is given prior to the use of [social networking](#) or internet sites;
2. The resource parent(s) and/or residential facility has been advised to seek permission from DCS prior to describing or placing any picture of a child under the care and supervision of DCS on any [social networking](#) or internet site; and
3. A conversation is held with the resource parent(s) and/or residential facility regarding utilization of privacy settings to restrict the general public from viewing the social network profiles of a child under the care and supervision of DCS or internet sites in which such a child may be represented or referenced.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Supervisory techniques to use when a child uses the internet include, but are not limited to:

1. Utilize the Child Family Team (CFT) Meeting process to address [social networking](#) and internet usage with the CFT;
2. Check the history of websites viewed;
3. Use parental control tools (individual Internet service providers can provide guidance in this area);
4. Keep the computer in a common or public area of the home;
5. Educate children and caregivers about not posting or sharing personal information online, as well as the consequences of doing so;
6. Prohibit the posting of pictures with a child's identifying information (e.g., names on jerseys, school information, letterman's jackets, or location);
7. Inform the child to advise his or her FCM or resource parent(s) if someone makes any kind of contact with him or her that is sexual, unsolicited, or threatening; and
8. Emphasize no tolerance for any type of [cyber bullying](#).

## FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

## RELATED INFORMATION

### **Social Networking**

Refers to online communities of individuals who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. This may include but is not limited to MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

### **Public Mass Media**

Refers collectively to all media technologies, including the Internet, television, newspapers, YouTube, and the radio which are used for mass communications.

### **Cyber Bullying**

Refers to the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.