

### K-12 cybersecurity conversation guide

Helps parents, teachers, school administrators, and guardians have conversations teaching K-12 students about safe cyber practices.



Students are especially vulnerable to identity theft, as some may not discover it for years until they apply for a credit card or car loan! Additionally, hackers often view students as pathways into school networks, allowing them to steal information on teachers, staff, and parents.

#### Key points to discuss

## Why you shouldn't click on unknown links



- Hackers have bad intentions, and they use phishing links to infiltrate your life!
- Unknown links come in all forms, including text messages, emails, search engines, websites, social media posts, direct messages, and more
- Sometimes hackers will try to create a friendship with you under false pretenses, or impersonate a family member, friend, teacher, or authority figure to get you to share information with them (this is called social engineering)
- Clicking on these links can have consequences that directly affect your life by ruining the device you love or even damaging your friendships if you are hacked and impersonated

## Some red flags of phishing messages

- SMS phishing (or SMSishing) is a big problem for students in K-12
- Legitimate sources can misspell words or have errors sometimes, but be cautious when you see any errors in the messages that are sent to you
- Always hover over a link (including emails) before you click on it on your computer to see where it will go
- Threat and urgency are often conveyed in the message to scare you into acting before you can verify if the link is safe
- Always be suspicious of messages or calls that ask you for sensitive information (like login credentials)
- To trick you, sometimes hackers will offer you fake rewards to get you to turn over your information

# Why you should avoid

A phishing message

can have any mix of

these issues

scam ads

- Ads are paid to be put in front of you, and sometimes hackers pay to create scam ads that harvest your personal data and invade your privacy
- Watch out for the common phishing red flags in these scam advertisements, and pay extra attention to the link

#### It's important to speak up and get help if they click on a bad link



- Emphasize that asking for your help will not be punished or reprimanded. (We recommend a no-consequences self-reporting environment, when possible)
- If you click on a bad link, your life isn't over! You just need to tell an adult
- Once adults are involved, they can take the necessary steps to fix it
- But it can be hard to fix, so please be careful and be cautious when clicking!



## Examples of when to be extra vigilant!

These are common scenarios when a student may be targeted with a phishing attempt. These examples are separated by age group, but you can pick and choose the most relevant scenarios for your students.



#### **Elementary**

- Researching information for a class report
- Looking for online math tutoring courses
- Searching for online videos & citing unverified information in schoolwork
- · Messaging a teacher with a question

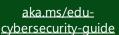
#### Secondary

- Searching for a customer support number
- Differentiating between ads and organic posts on social media
- Getting a message asking you to input your password or threatening that you'll be locked out of your account
- Being DM-ed with an unknown link and the other person urging you to click the link
- Searching for a summer job and applying for a scam company
- Researching and applying for college or trade school
- Looking for a doctor nearby
- Getting a friend request from a duplicated profile of someone you know



#### **Links & Resources**







aka.ms/educybersecurity



aka.ms/what-isphishing



aka.ms/what-ismalware



aka.ms/parentalcontrol-apps