Student Discussion Questions – Internet Safety & Social Networking

The following questions can be used to generate small group or class discussion, either in a face-to-face environment or on the network discussion forums, about Internet Safety, appropriate/inappropriate online behavior, social networking, and digital citizenship.

1. Concerns about Internet safety have caused schools to restrict access to certain types of Web sites, such as social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. Why do you think people are so concerned about staying “safe” online?

2. You are cautioned to never post your full name, age, picture, or location online. Why is that? Are there other pieces of personal information that shouldn’t be shared, or other things that you should or should not do, in order to stay safe online?

3. Do you have an adult that you trust and can talk to about online situations that make you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused? This can be a parent, your teacher, or another adult that you would feel comfortable talking to.

4. If you found out that one of your friends was making up stories about someone and posting them online, or sending nasty email messages to somebody, what do you think you should do? Stay out of it, because it’s not your problem, or tell someone who could talk to your friend about his or her behavior?

5. What should you do if you get a “friend” request on a social network from someone that you don’t know face-to-face?

6. What social networking sites, if any, do you currently belong to? How would you characterize the differences between the sites? Have you read the “Terms of Use” for sites that you belong to?

7. Consider the following scenario: Susan posted some pictures of herself on a social network. She set the preferences for her photo album so that only network members who were her “friends” could see the pictures, but later she discovers that people who aren’t on her friend list had also seen the pictures.
Question: How is it possible for this to happen? What implications does this have for the types of content you should post online?

8. How might you use social networking tools to collaborate with students in other classrooms? Can you think of a topic or subject that would be especially interesting to explore in this type of online environment?

9. Discussion forums are online conversations that allow network members to contribute to the conversation any time and from anywhere that they have access to the networking site. Why is it important for members to feel like they can freely share their own opinions, even if their ideas or comments are different from those of other members? How can a sense of acceptance be developed?

10. Under what conditions do you think a member should be banned from taking part in a social network? What could a banned member do to be allowed to rejoin the network community?