A Discussion For Parents:

The following are ten important topics parents should be aware of to help keep their school-age children safe and law-abiding while using the Internet & Social Media.

1. ***Cyberbullying:*** Teach children about the impact of cyberbullying and the importance of treating others with respect online. Explain that cyberbullying can have serious legal consequences.

2. ***Privacy and Personal Information:*** Educate children on the importance of not sharing personal information, such as their full name, address, phone number, or school name, with strangers online. This helps protect them from identity theft and other online crimes.

3. ***Copyright Infringement:*** Make sure children understand that downloading or sharing copyrighted material without permission, such as music, movies, or software, is illegal. Encourage them to use legal sources for their entertainment and educational needs.

4. ***Online Predators:*** Discuss the dangers of interacting with strangers online and the tactics predators might use to gain their trust. Encourage children to report any suspicious behavior to a trusted adult immediately.

5. ***Safe Social Media Use:*** Set guidelines for social media use, including what is appropriate to post and share. Remind children that once something is posted online, it can be difficult to remove and can have long-term consequences.

6. ***Phishing and Scams:*** Teach children how to recognize phishing emails and online scams. Explain that they should never click on suspicious links or provide personal information to unknown sources.

7. ***Online Gaming:*** Monitor the games your children play and the interactions they have within those games. Some online games have chat features that can expose children to inappropriate content or interactions.

8. ***Sexting and Explicit Content:*** Have open conversations about the dangers and legal implications of sharing explicit images or messages. Emphasize that once something is shared, it can be difficult to control where it goes.

9. ***Digital Footprint:*** Explain to children that everything they post online contributes to their digital footprint. Encourage them to think carefully before posting and to consider how it might affect their future.

10. ***Legal Age Restrictions:*** Make sure children are aware of the age restrictions for various online platforms and services. Using these platforms underage can lead to legal issues and exposure to inappropriate content.

OLTG – *Recommendations for Parents*

Observe:

- Parents should observe their children's online activities by periodically checking their browsing history and social media interactions to ensure they are engaging in safe and appropriate behavior. Additionally, parents can watch for changes in their children's behavior or mood that might indicate issues such as cyberbullying or exposure to inappropriate content, allowing them to address concerns promptly and effectively.

Listen:

- Parents should actively listen to their children by giving them their full attention during discussions about their online activities, showing empathy and understanding without interruption. By validating their children's feelings and experiences, parents can build trust and create a safe space for open communication about internet and social media use.

Talk:

- Parents should engage in open and honest conversations with their children about internet and social media use, asking questions about their online experiences and listening to their concerns without judgment. By discussing potential risks and setting clear expectations together, parents can help their children navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.

Guide:

- Parents should provide guidance by setting clear rules and boundaries for internet and social media use, explaining the reasons behind these guidelines to help children understand their importance. They should also offer practical advice on how to handle online challenges, such as recognizing and avoiding cyberbullying or protecting personal information.

OLTG – Inconclusion:

Offering support, advice, and direction to help their children make informed decisions and develop good habits. Be collaborative and understanding vs controlling.