



SAN FELIPE DEL RIO CISD

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For Immediate Release

SCHOOL OFFICIALS WARN PARENTS OF CURRENT ONLINE RISKS

Teachers, Counselors and Administrators in SFDR CISD have become aware of an increasing trend in the use of anonymous video communication applications and websites among students. These platforms are easily accessible through your child's cell phones and often market themselves as tools for making new friends but frequently expose minors to significant risks.

Platforms like Omegle, Emerald Chat & OmeTV, Monkey & Yubo, and Discord have the potential for facilitating harmful interactions between adults and children. Despite Omegle's closure, numerous "Omegle alternatives" and clone sites have emerged, replicating the same dangerous environment where users are paired randomly for one-on-one video chats with strangers. These sites often bypass traditional safety filters. The following table outlines the specific risks associated with these platforms:

Predatory Behavior	Inappropriate Content	Privacy Violations	Sextortion & Bullying
Adults may use these platforms to target, groom, or solicit personal information from minors under the guise of peer-to-peer interaction.	Due to the live nature of video chats, students are frequently exposed to explicit, violent, or otherwise age-inappropriate material without warning.	Many of these sites collect location data and IP addresses, which can be used to identify a student's physical location or school.	Interactions can be recorded without consent and used for blackmail, harassment, or public shaming within the school community.

The FBI most often sees crimes against children begin when an adult either forges a relationship with a young victim online and then later arranges to meet and abuse the child or coerces a child into producing sexually explicit images or videos through manipulation, gifts, or threats—a crime called sextortion.

The most important advice for parents is to have open and ongoing conversations about safe and appropriate online behavior. We believe that open communication between parents and students is the most effective defense against digital threats. Other advice to consider:

- Educate yourself about the websites, software, games, and apps that your children use.
- Check kids' social media and gaming profiles and posts. Have conversations about what is appropriate to say or share.
- Explain to your kids that once images or comments are posted online, they can be shared with anyone and never truly disappear.
- Make sure your kids use privacy settings to restrict access to their online profiles.

- Tell your children to be extremely wary when communicating with anyone online who they do not know in real life.
- Encourage kids to choose appropriate screennames and to create strong passwords.
- Make it a rule with your kids that they can't arrange to meet up with someone they met online without your knowledge and supervision.
- Stress to your children that making any kind of threat online—even if they think it's a joke—is a crime.
- Report any inappropriate contact between an adult and your child to law enforcement immediately. Notify the site they were using, too.

By staying informed and proactive, we can work together to ensure that our children navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.