Kids can't stay away from technology these days. From homework to playing games and surfing the web, tech is part of their everyday routine. With the increased use of the internet comes the potential for dangers, especially for children. This Kids Internet Safety Guide is designed to help parents navigate the ever-changing landscape of online threats and keep their children safe.

**The Top Online Threats**

1. **Violent and Explicit Content**: There are a number of potential dangers in cyberspace, including exposure to violent content on the internet, and nearly 60% of online predators have never met their child targets in real life.¹

2. **Male Predators**: There are more online predators who are male than female. And 98% of online predators have never met their child targets in real life.²

3. **Cyberbullying**: Girls are more likely to be the victims of cyberbullying and more boys admit to bullying others online.¹

4. **From Online Predators**

   - Be aware of the dangers online.
   - Know that "safe" places still require vigilance. There are age restrictions for websites and apps.
   - Set up firewalls and content blockers.
   - Use the built-in safety applications that come on your devices and add more to be extra-safe. Block all websites that aren't rated safe for children. Use a content filter or firewall that is designed to protect your child from graphic content.
   - Know what the proper responses are so you can focus on helping your child.
   - Have a plan in place in case your child is exposed to graphic content.

5. **From Cyberbullying**

   - Know your child's social media passwords and screen names.
   - Set up rules and time limits if you allow your kids to use them. Always follow the guide online behaviors - check in regularly.
   - If appropriate, report the abusive activity to school or law enforcement officials.
   - Let your kids know that it's safe for them to talk to you if something makes them feel bad, scared, or sad.

6. **Steps to Take if Your Child**

   - Monitor your child's online activity.
   - Help your child choose various settings such as: 'Who can contact me?'
   - Help your children choose various privacy settings such as: ‘Who can see my content?’
   - Help your children choose various settings such as: ‘When can I post content?’
   - Watch for signs of trouble or distress.

7. **What to do if Your Child**

   - Make sure kids know not to click on things or open files or attachments from unknown sources, including email and direct messages. Talk about pop-up ads and when and how to access them.
   - Teach them that bad stuff can come from many sources, including email and direct messages.
   - Be aware of the danger of public records and identify the top online threats to kids and tips for keeping kids safe.
   - Have ongoing discussions with your child. Talk about what cyberbullying is and what types of communication are acceptable and unacceptable.

8. **Don’t Do**

   - Don’t wait until the heat of the moment to come up with the proper response.
   - Don’t blame your child.
   - Don’t scare your child.
   - Don’t shame your child.
   - Don’t freak out.

9. **Points were assigned to states based on the types of laws currently on the books and**

   - The Cyberbullying Research Center, "State Sexting Laws"; Cyberbullying Research Center, "State Cyberbullying Laws".

   - The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "The Online Enticement of Children: An In-Depth Analysis of CyberTipline Reports".

   - The Dr. Nir Kshetri at University of North Carolina-Greensboro identified the top online threats to kids and tips for keeping kids safe.

   - The Kids Internet Safety Guide - What to do to keep your kiddos safe online.

Parents need to have transparent discussions around the vectors of cyber security, privacy, and digital rights. They should also know what to do if their child is exposed to online threats. This includes monitoring their children’s online activity, helping them choose various security settings, and having ongoing discussions about what online behavior is acceptable and unacceptable. Additionally, parents should be aware of the dangers of online predators and cyberbullying. They should also teach their children about the potential dangers of online content and public records. By following these steps, parents can help keep their children safe online.