



# PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDE

## A LETTER FROM HARD ROCK

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Teens immerse themselves online and define who they are through social media. But their savvy navigation of platforms and connectivity does not guarantee the choices about what they say and share online will always be safe. Hard Rock's Social Identity Quest introduces a quest-game format to challenge youth to examine how they construct and express themselves online. It inspires them to focus their well-honed social media skills toward better understanding of risks and issues that can arise on the internet.

Partnering with ECPAT-USA and EduNetwork Partners, Hard Rock International wants to bring this quest directly into the classroom. The program does not judge, lecture or spoon-feed "correct" answers to students. Instead, it generates a student-driven conversation, facilitated by educators, and emphasizes decision-making.

Why offer this program now? With young people spending more time than ever online, we want them to join our collective actions to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation and human trafficking. The Social Identity Quest has been carefully designed to focus on choices and building skills that reduce risks, carefully addressing adverse consequences in measured and sensitive ways. We want educators to deliver the program comfortably and effectively. This program is one way that Hard Rock is working to combat human trafficking, one of the most heinous issues affecting our world today.

The sad fact is that traffickers are looking to exploit the vulnerabilities of young people. And they constantly adapt and expand their tactics. Today, the realities of inequalities and vulnerabilities globally and regionally, along with pervasive personal technology, increase opportunities for traffickers. Consider these facts:

- More young people create sexualized content than ever before, the circulation of which can lead to dangerous consequences.
- Because of the lasting impacts of COVID-19, trafficking and exploitation are now increasingly taking place online and through social media.
- Despite depictions of trafficking in the media, trafficking does not need to involve someone being smuggled across borders. It is happening in the communities around us.

All hotel and casino properties can be targeted by criminals who ply their despicable trade. Hard Rock will not tolerate human trafficking if there are actions we can take to prevent and disrupt these crimes. So we turned to ECPAT-USA, one of the world's leading organizations working to end human trafficking, to create The Social Identity Quest. We are not only inspired by ECPAT-USA's vision – to shape a world where every child has the right to live free from sexual exploitation and trafficking – we want to help achieve it.

Sincerely,

*Paul Pellizzari*

Vice President,  
Global Social Responsibility | Hard Rock

## WHY THIS PROGRAM?

The **Social Identity Quest** was developed in collaboration with ECPAT-USA, the leading anti-trafficking policy organization in the United States. Their mission is to protect every child's human right to grow up free from the threat of sexual exploitation and trafficking. As a member of ECPAT International, ECPAT-USA belongs to a network of organizations in more than 100 countries all working together to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

One of their goals is to: "Empower youth to take the lead against human trafficking by equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to help them become activists."

Teens connect with one another online through texts and social media. Unfortunately, predators lurk online, hiding their identities, as they try to connect directly with underage children by preying on their vulnerabilities.

With this hands-on practical program, we challenge students to explore their online lives using examples they encounter, while building knowledge and expanding options for staying safer online.

The objectives of this program are to:

- Interactively examine online dangers and vulnerabilities
- Challenge students to reflect on their online activity and identity
- Develop skills to recognize and navigate online vulnerabilities
- Provide resources for students, educators, and parents to continue understanding online interactions

### FROM ECPAT-USA

Efforts to combat human trafficking will only succeed if young people are empowered with a leadership role. ECPAT-USA educates students to be the foremost advocates in their communities, sharing facts, misconceptions, and risks of trafficking with them. We provide youth with the tools needed to identify the warning signs and proper resources to protect themselves and their peers. We also collaborate with private sector companies to prevent human traffickers from exploiting victims.

The Social Identity Quest is a partnership that combines Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming's global reach and experience in the hotel and casino industries with EduNetwork Partners' specialty in designing educational programs and ECPAT-USA's expert knowledge on these issues. By bringing these efforts directly into the classrooms of America, we are able to reach more youth with this crucial information about the risks that arise on the internet.

This program is an easy way for educators to engage in this difficult topic and can serve as an introduction to ECPAT-USA's Youth Against Child Trafficking (Y-ACT) program. To learn more about Y-ACT, including how you can bring the free virtual workshop series to your school, please contact us at [info@ecpatusa.org](mailto:info@ecpatusa.org).

ECPAT-USA is the leading anti-trafficking policy organization in the United States. As a member of ECPAT International, ECPAT-USA belongs to a network of organizations in more than 100 countries all working together to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

## WHAT WILL STUDENTS DO?

This series of QUESTS directs students to think through their actions.

Students will access the QUESTS through the program website, where they will see real-life scenarios. By choosing particular outcomes, they are prompted with resources and information related to each scenario.

The QUESTS include questions and classroom projects, to be led by an educator, that generate open discussion around the topics.

Because students are deeply immersed in digital life, the QUESTS emphasize their lived experience and are structured to have direct discussions where they can contribute what they know.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

As a parent/guardian, you play an important role. Your teen will be encouraged to talk about what they have learned. Being open and accessible can extend the discussion at home.

Below are a few questions educators will use to introduce the program to their students.

### WHAT IS YOUR ONLINE IDENTITY?

**ANSWER:** Anything from a social media profile or a forum account to a video game character or even a shopping cart. Basically, it can either be a social identity associated with an online community, or just a simple account or data that's associated with online services. Any bit of information (no matter how small) that can be found about an individual on the Internet.

### WHAT TYPES OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES INFLUENCE HOW OTHERS SEE YOU AND HOW YOU SEE OTHERS?

**ANSWER:** This area is wide open – social media posts & responses, online forums, online gaming – students will come up with lots of examples.

### IF YOU POST SOMETHING ONLINE, HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

**ANSWER:** Assume the internet is forever. Even when you think it is gone. You can delete it but there could be a screenshot somewhere.

### IF YOU POST SOMETHING ONLINE, COULD IT HARM YOUR FAMILY?

**ANSWER:** Although you are personally posting it, your words or images could harm your family.

### WILL A FUTURE EMPLOYER BE ABLE TO FIND IT WHEN YOU ARE OUT OF SCHOOL AND LOOKING FOR A JOB?

**ANSWER:** Comments, photos, and questionable activities can be found, even if you thought they were deleted. It is almost impossible to guarantee that something you posted 20 years ago is gone and won't be found.

## WHO CONTROLS WHAT OTHERS SEE ABOUT YOU ONLINE?

**ANSWER:** You control what you post but you can't control what others post about you. You can control your activities to reduce the possibility of embarrassing content.

## IS EVERYONE WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE ONLINE?

**ANSWER:** Unfortunately, there are dangerous people online who hide their identity and lure children. Never before has it been easier for predators to hide their identity, connect directly with children, and coerce them into sharing explicit images.

From the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
[www.missingkids.org/theissues/onlineenticement](http://www.missingkids.org/theissues/onlineenticement)

***“Online Enticement involves an individual communicating with someone believed to be a child via the internet with the intent to commit a sexual offense or abduction. This is a broad category of online exploitation and includes sextortion, in which a child is being groomed to take sexually explicit images and/or ultimately meet face-to-face with someone for sexual purposes, or to engage in a sexual conversation online or, in some instances, to sell/trade the child’s sexual images. This type of victimization takes place across every platform; social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, etc.”***



## ARE THERE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO KEEP OUT OF DANGER?

### ANSWERS:

- Know who you are connecting with and don't accept requests from unknown people.
- Set privacy settings for your social media accounts to make them private to your friends only.
- Keep your address, full birthday, and phone number off your account.
- If anyone asks you to take a revealing picture, sends you an image, or tries to pressure you into performing a sex act, report it to the police and your parents or other trusted adults. It's not your fault and you are a crime victim in need of protection.
- You can speak to an adult/professional at your school if you need help.

## HOW DO YOU START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD?

Taking an interest in what they are doing online is important. Ask about the games they play. Ask them to show you and if you see friends they play with, ask who they are.

You might start by talking about some of the social media channels they use.

Create a safe space for them to talk with you, without fear of “getting in trouble” or feeling ashamed or guilty if they have been a victim in any way.

ECPAT-USA has developed this [Parent Guide](#) to help answer your questions.

To learn more about online sexual exploitation and child sex trafficking, resources and tools are available on ECPAT-USA’s website, along with stories from our Survivors’ Council at [www.ecpatusa.org](http://www.ecpatusa.org).

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

We recognize that this is a sensitive topic and one that may be difficult for teens to learn about and for you as a parent/guardian to discuss with your teen. Here are some additional resources:

### **ECPAT-USA Parent Online Guide to Internet Safety**

#### **National Sexual Assault Hotline**

1-800-656-Hope (4673)  
<https://hotline.rainn.org/>

#### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-7233  
Or text “START” to 88788

#### **NCMEC (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)**

1-800-THE-LOST  
NCMEC’s CyberTipline is the nation’s centralized reporting system for the online exploitation of children  
<https://www.missingkids.org/>

#### **National Human Trafficking Hotline**

1-888-373-7888  
Or text 233733  
Also offers an online chat. All are available 24/7 in English and Spanish, or in 200 additional languages through an on-call interpreter.  
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>

