



Dear Parent:

Your child is participating in **Music Rules!**, an educational program designed to help lay the foundation for respecting all forms of intellectual property, especially music recordings. Made possible by the Recording Industry Association of America, this program also promotes musical and artistic creativity and encourages children to use computer technology responsibly.

In school your child is learning the rules against “songlifting” – a term for making copies of music recordings without paying for them. Like shoplifting, songlifting is illegal, and as your child learns why, he or she will also learn the basic principles of copyright protection and how they apply to all types of intellectual property.

This booklet is designed to help you reinforce and build on these lessons at home. On the back cover you will find guidelines for keeping your home computer free of illegally copied songs, games, videos, and software. Inside, the booklet opens up to form a mini-poster that lists ten tips for keeping your family safe on the Internet. Read through these watchwords with your child, talk about each point, then hang the mini-poster near your home computer as a reminder to everyone that caution and common sense are as important as curiosity whenever you venture online.

Questions about Copyright

Can I make copies of the CDs and other music I purchase?

Most people today listen to music in many different formats – on CD, the computer, MP3 player, or cell phone. Personal use is permitted when music fans buy their music. Typically, fans make copies in several different formats and even combine different songs to make their own special mixes. But you cannot give the copies you make to anyone else – that is a violation of copyright.

Can I make copies of music that I borrow?

It is illegal to make copies of other people's CDs or music files without the copyright holder's permission. Likewise, it is illegal to make copies of your own music for other people. You can play the music that you buy and make copies for your own personal use, but the content itself remains the intellectual property of the copyright holders.

Can I use file-sharing software to exchange music with other computers?

Although file-sharing software can be legal, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that file-sharing companies can be held responsible for encouraging people to illegally exchange copyrighted material over the Internet in this way. Individuals who use file-sharing sites to upload and download copyrighted music without permission can also be sued or prosecuted. In addition to these risks, file-sharing software gives others direct access to your computer hard drive and any private information, such as medical and financial records, that may be stored there. File-sharing software also makes computers more vulnerable to viruses, and may contain spyware, which is designed to feed information about your online activities to a third party, impeding your computer's performance in the process.

Can illegal file-sharing be detected?

Yes. Watchdog agencies that monitor the Internet can identify those who engage in illegal file-sharing and may notify their Internet Service Provider about this activity.

What are the consequences of illegal copying?

Criminal penalties for violating copyright can run up to 5 years in prison and/or \$250,000 in fines, and these penalties apply even when the violation does not involve financial or commercial gain. Copyright violators can also be sued for damages in civil court, including the parents of under-age violators, even if they were unaware of their child's actions.

For more information

Visit the Music Rules! website at www.music-rules.com to download a ten-page parent guide titled "Young People, Music & the Internet" and for links to other useful online resources.



Internet Safety Checklist

Keep Your Family Safe Online

1 Never provide personal information online without a parent's permission.

This includes registering for clubs, placing orders, exchanging information in chat rooms, and exchanging photographs with strangers by e-mail.

2 Let a parent respond to intimidating e-mail.

Watch out for bogus warnings that you must immediately confirm your password or pay a huge bill, as well as personal threats and harassment.

3 Tell a parent about invitations to meet in person.

Online friends who want to meet in person might not be as nice as you imagine.

4 Share the fun you find online.

Talk about your online friends and take a parent along to websites you discover. Let them know what you are doing online and help them have as much fun as you do.

5 Steer clear of inappropriate content.

Tell a parent when you find a website that makes you uncomfortable, and check with a parent if you think a game might be too violent or a song too suggestive.

6 Be friendly but don't be fooled.

People are not always who they seem online. Someone who says he's your age might really be years older. Tell a parent if you think you're talking to a pretender.

7 Don't always believe your eyes.

Not everything you read online is true. Websites that seem informative can be out of date or extremely biased. And offers that seem too good to be true probably are.

8 Get permission to download.

It's possible that a free game or piece of software actually carries a virus that could wreck the family computer. Check with a parent before taking the chance.

9 Avoid unauthorized file-sharing software.

This software may contain spyware that will feed information about your online life to Internet opportunists, and it can let strangers snoop through your personal information.

10 Always show respect for intellectual property.

Remember that it is illegal to make or take copies of online songs, games, videos, and software unless you have the copyright holder's permission.

Music rules!

