

Safe Online Surfing Challenge Launches

[fbi.gov/news/stories/safe-online-surfing-challenge-opens-090519](https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/safe-online-surfing-challenge-opens-090519)

With Participation Growing, Cyber Safety Program Opens for 2019-20 School Year



The FBI's Safe Online Surfing (SOS) Internet Challenge, which had record participation in 2018-2019, is reopening for the start of the new school year to help students navigate the web securely. As the FBI sees more and more crimes begin online, the growing participation numbers show that educators and caregivers also recognize the importance of teaching young people web literacy and safety.

"Many children and teens see Internet-enabled devices as essential to their lives—needed for everything from schoolwork to social connections," said Unit Chief Jonathan Cox of the FBI's Office of Public Affairs. "The fact that these tools feel like second nature, however, makes it easy for young people to forget the risks they can face online. The goals of the FBI's SOS program are to make children aware of these threats and give them the knowledge they need to steer around them."

The SOS program teaches young people about web terminology and how to recognize secure and trustworthy sites. Other lessons cover how to protect personal details online, create strong passwords, avoid viruses and scams, be wary of strangers, and be a good virtual citizen. Students in third through eighth grades visit the island that corresponds with their grade level and surf through activities that teach how to recognize hazards and respond appropriately. The entire curriculum is also available in Spanish.

More than 1 million students completed the program and took the SOS exam during the 2018-2019 school year—an 18 percent increase from the year before. Schools from all 50 states, D.C., Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands were among the 17,172 schools that competed in the challenge.

SOS activities are available to everyone, but teachers must register for a class to participate in the tests and competition. Any public, private, or home school in the United States and its territories with at least five students is eligible for the online challenge. Teachers manage their students' participation in the program, and the FBI does not collect or store any student information.

Each month during the school year, the classes with the top exam scores nationwide receive an FBI-SOS certificate and may be congratulated in person by local FBI personnel.

Explore SOS activities and register at <https://sos.fbi.gov>.

Select Feedback from Participating Teachers, 2018-2019

"My sincere compliments on a very well designed and student-friendly website. My students are very excited about using the site for their digital citizenship lessons."

- *Yigo, Guam*

"The FBI SOS program is wonderful! Thanks so much for all of your efforts in working to keep our students safe!"

- *Hershey, Pennsylvania*

"Thank you for this resource for my students! I use it every year.

- *Clayton, Delaware*

Usage Statistics

In the 2018-2019 academic year, 1,071,975 students took the SOS examination. The largest number of participants were in the sixth grade.

Since October 2012, the FBI-SOS website has been visited nearly 3.6 million times, with a total of more than 10.6 million page views.