

# Is Your Child Safe on A School-Issued Computer?

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During this period of remote learning, our kids are spending more time than ever on their school-issued computers. In 2020, nearly 93% of households in the US with school-aged children reported some form of distanced learning during COVID-19. Please be aware that this may mean your children are more at risk for solicitation by Internet predators, and the tablet the school placed in your child's hands may not be as safe as you think.

An illustrative and disturbing action was filed in New Jersey, alleging that a 12-year-old girl (K.S.) was kidnapped and taken to a hotel, where she was sexually assaulted for almost two days. The predator initiated contact with K.S. entirely through her school computer, and over a period of months, lured her to meet him. Like most of us, the girl's parents assumed that the school had installed safeguards and limitations on students' access.

When K.S. began spending excessive time online, her parents sought her browsing history through the school. That request was ignored, and K.S.'s parents then insisted that the school retain the computer at the end of each day, so K.S. would only have access while monitored (presumably) at school. K.S. had no Internet access independent of her school tablet.

Thankfully, K.S. was found and rescued by police after her parents' urgent reports that she was missing. In their subsequent lawsuit against the school district, board of education, and related parties, K.S.'s parents alleged that the school failed to implement Internet protocols which would have prevented the predator's access to K.S., and otherwise failed to control and monitor students' usage of emails, chatrooms, and sites. The suit also claimed that the school's guidance counselor was aware of K.S.'s contact with the assailant, but failed to notify either them or the police.

On January 1, 2021, the school district and related defendants entered a structured settlement awarding \$650,000 to K.S. and \$300,000 to her parents. None of us want another child exposed to even a risk of such trauma. Please be aggressive in checking your child's Internet usage and *do not assume* your school's protocols are fail-safe.

Should you have any questions or desire a consult, contact Sharon Iskra at Bailey Glasser, [siskra@baileyglasser.com](mailto:siskra@baileyglasser.com) or (304) 345-6555.

## **Attorneys**

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## **Practice Areas**

Sexual Abuse & Harassment