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## Guidelines for creating strong passwords

Here are some tips for creating passwords to keep your information safe.

**Strong passwords** are based on a descriptive phrase or sentence that's easy for you to remember and difficult for someone else to guess – like the first letters in words that make up a favorite title or song, the first letters of words in a sentence about something you did – and include a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols. For example, “I went to Western Elementary School for grade 3” could be used to build a password like: lw2We\$t4g3.

**Moderate passwords** are passwords that are strong and not easy for malicious software to guess but could be guessed by someone who knows you (for example, lwenttoWestern).

**Weak passwords** commonly use personal information like a pet's name, are easy to crack, and can be guessed by someone who knows you (for example, “IloveBuddy” or “Ilikechocolate”).

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## DOs

- Use a different password for each of your important accounts.
- Use at least eight characters. The longer the better (as long as you can remember it!).
- Use combinations of letters (uppercase and lowercase), numbers, and symbols.
- Make your passwords memorable so you don't need to write them down, which would be risky.
- Immediately change your password if you know or believe it may be known by someone other than a trusted adult.
- Always use strong screen locks on your devices. Set your devices to automatically lock in case they end up in the wrong hands.
- Consider using a password manager, such as one built into your browser, to remember your passwords. This way you can use a unique password for each of your accounts and not have to remember them all.

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## DON'Ts

- Don't use personal information (name, address, email, phone number, Social Security number, mother's maiden name, birth dates, etc.), or common words in your password.
- Don't use a password that's easy to guess, like your nickname, just the name of your school, favorite baseball team, a string of numbers (like 123456), etc. And definitely don't use the word “password”!
- Don't share your password with anyone other than your parents or guardian.
- Never write passwords down where someone can find them.