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## **Cox Announces Facebook Agreement to Make Site Safer for Youngsters**

**LANSING** – Attorney General Mike Cox and the attorneys general of 48 states and the District of Columbia today announced that the social networking site Facebook has agreed to changes to better protect children from predators and inappropriate content. Facebook has also agreed to participate in a task force on implementation of age and identity verification software.

The agreement is similar to one that the networking site MySpace reached in January with Michigan, 48 other states, and the District of Columbia. MySpace agreed to head a task force, which Facebook has joined, to explore and develop age and identity identification tools for social networking sites.

“This generation is exposed to many things that their parents never had to deal with,” Cox said. “These changes will help safeguard children on the Internet.”

Changes agreed to by Facebook include providing automatic warning messages when a child is in danger of giving personal information to an unknown adult; restricting the ability of users to change their listed ages; acting more aggressively to remove inappropriate content and groups from the site and requiring third party vendors to adhere to Facebook’s safety and privacy guidelines.

Under the changes, the first time a Facebook user wants to change his or her age, website staff will review their profile to determine whether the change is appropriate.

In addition, companies offering Facebook users services -- called “widgets” -- will now have to implement and enforce Facebook’s safety and privacy guidelines.

Facebook also has agreed to maintain a list of pornographic websites and regularly sever any links to such sites. It will remove groups for incest, pedophilia,

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cyberbullying and other violations of the site's terms of services, as well as expel from the site individual violators of those terms.

Facebook also will:

- More prominently display safety tips;
- Require users under 18 to affirm they have read Facebook's safety tips when they sign up;
- Regularly review models for abuse reporting and perform a test using the New Jersey Attorney General's abuse reporting icon.

"Remember this – No matter how successful Facebook is in protecting minors on their website, parents are and always will be, the very first line of defense, and they need to continue to monitor their children's Internet activities and report any suspicious activity to authorities," Cox noted.

Last September, Cox initiated a statewide effort to educate children, teachers and parents about Internet safety. The program, called the Michigan Cyber Safety Initiative (Michigan CSI), has been presented to more than 200,000 children in more than 160 school districts in 63 of Michigan's 83 counties. To learn more about Michigan CSI, visit [www.michigan.gov/csi](http://www.michigan.gov/csi).