

April 2026

# NNPS CYBERTIMES

THE LATEST UPDATES  
IN INFORMATION SECURITY

## April: When Jokes Are Fine, Scams Are Not

April begins with April Fools' Day, a time for harmless jokes, surprises, and lighthearted fun. Unfortunately, cybercriminals enjoy this time of year too, but for very different reasons. While pranks may be funny, online scams are no joke.

With spring in full swing, schedules get busier. Families travel, students are more active online, and distractions increase. Cybercriminals take advantage of this by pushing scams that promise rewards, refunds, prizes, or urgent opportunities.

April is about learning how to recognize when something sounds too good to be true.

### This Month's Cyber Focus: Scams & Psychological Manipulation

Unlike fake websites or suspicious messages, scams are designed to feel exciting, helpful, or lucky. They often appeal to emotion rather than fear, using offers that encourage quick action before you have time to think.

Common examples include:

- **"You've won a prize -- claim it now!"**
- **"Limited-time refund or rebate available."**
- **"Exclusive offer just for you, act now!"**
- **"Congratulations! You've been selected."**

Scams succeed when emotions replace caution.



### Common Scam Warning Signs

Be cautious if a message or offer:

- Promises free money, prizes, or rewards with little effort
- Requires immediate action to "lock in" an opportunity
- Requests payment, gift cards, or personal information to receive a reward
- Uses vague details or avoids answering questions
- Asks you to keep the offer secret

Legitimate organizations do not require secrecy or urgency to deliver real benefits.



April 2026

# NNPS CYBERTIMES

## THE LATEST UPDATES IN INFORMATION SECURITY

### Practical Habits That Help For Families

This month, focus on thinking before accepting offers:

- **Pause before responding to prizes, deals, or refunds.**
  - **Research offers independently instead of clicking the provided links.**
  - **Remember that legitimate rewards do not require upfront payment.**
  - **Trust your instincts; emotions are often used to bypass good judgment.**
  - **When unsure, ask or report before taking action**
- Slowing down turns scams into obvious red flags.**

### Helpful reminders for families include:

Spring often brings an increase in online activity for students and families—shopping, gaming, travel planning, apps, and social media use all tend to rise this time of year. Unfortunately, scammers know this and design offers that feel exciting, rewarding, or “lucky” in order to catch people off guard.

Families can help by talking with students about how scams are designed to manipulate emotions such as excitement, curiosity, or fear of missing out. Many scam messages are intentionally vague and fast-moving, encouraging quick decisions before someone has time to think or ask questions. Helping students recognize this pattern builds awareness and confidence rather than anxiety.

Helpful reminders for families include:

- Real prizes, refunds, or rewards do not require payment or personal information to claim.
- Legitimate organizations allow time to think and verify
- Online pop-ups, messages, or offers should never pressure someone to act immediately.
- Asking for help before responding is a smart decision, not a mistake.

These conversations help students develop healthy skepticism and decision-making skills that support safe online behavior both now and in the future.



### Final Thoughts

April reminds us that while jokes can be fun, cybersecurity requires seriousness and awareness. January secured accounts, February strengthened verification, March improved safe browsing, and April builds the ability to recognize scams and manipulation.

As spring activities increase, taking a moment to pause and reflect on offers and decisions helps protect students, staff, and families across our school division.

Thank you for choosing awareness over impulse—and caution over chance.

Need help or have questions? Our Technology team is always here to support you.

<https://sbo.nn.k12.va.us/technology/>

[help.desk@nn.k12.va.us](mailto:help.desk@nn.k12.va.us)

(757) 881-5461 x.12411

**Stay smart. Stay secure. Stay connected.**

**-Team InfoSec**

