

NEWS FROM

KHEAA–Alabama

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Money Tips for Students, February 2016

Online security can help protect you from cyber thieves

The hacking theft of credit and debit card numbers should make everyone, including students, more careful about protecting their money from cyber thieves. The following measures can help, according to KHEAA–Alabama.

Never provide Social Security numbers, bank account numbers or credit card numbers in response to a phone call, fax, letter or email. If you get an email from a bank or company with which you do business, don't click on any links in the email. The link may lead you to a fake web page run by thieves hoping you'll enter personal information, or it may install spyware or malware on your computer. Instead, sign in through the website you normally use when you do business with that firm.

Never provide bank, credit card or other sensitive data on a website that doesn't explain how your information will be protected, including encryption to transmit and store data safely.

When using an ATM card or debit card, make sure no one standing nearby can see your personal identification number (PIN).

Install a free or low-cost firewall to stop intruders from gaining remote access to your personal computer. Download and frequently update security patches offered by your operating system and software vendors to correct weaknesses that a hacker could exploit.

KHEAA is a public, non-profit agency established in 1966 to improve students' access to college. It provides information about financial aid and financial literacy at no cost to students and parents. KHEAA provides the ThinkAhead Net Price Calculator to universities and colleges. The calculator, available on a school's website, lets students and parents determine their out-of-pocket costs for attending that school. KHEAA also helps colleges manage their student loan default rates and verify information submitted on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

In addition, KHEAA disburses private Advantage Education Loans on behalf of its sister agency, KHESLC. For more information about Advantage Education Loans, visit www.kheslc.com.

For more information about financial aid and college planning, visit www.alstudentaid.com.