



Online Safety - Parent Advice, Information and Sources of Support

More than ever, children are online for a long period of time as they access online learning and various platforms such as social media to maintain contact with their friends and peers. Whilst technology is proving to be invaluable to us all at this time, it is important that we are ensuring that our children are safe online. Here are some tips and links to support you.

Check that safety settings are switched on

Whether it's your home internet, mobile devices, consoles, apps or games, there are lots of settings to make them safer. The key questions to ask are - Can they chat to strangers? Can they video chat or 'go live'? Are their posts public?

It is important to ensure that they are not communicating with people they do not know - they should not be friends online with strangers. [Internet matters](#) has hundreds of guides to support you in setting parental controls.

Get your children to show you their apps and games

You don't need to know all about the latest app or game, but if your child shows you what they are doing and with whom, you'll probably see if it's appropriate or not. Remember 18-rated games are not more advanced - they are harmful to children! For parent guides to apps, including recommendations for kidsafe apps and video platforms, search for Common Sense Media or NSPCC's NetAware.

Don't try to hide the news about coronavirus

If you don't talk about it, your children might read inappropriate pages, believe scare stories or simply catastrophise in their heads. Why not watch Newsround together and talk about how they feel - there is guidance from Childline to help you.

Agree Boundaries

Have a family agreement about where they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. It is important to ensure that they are working in an area where you can keep an eye on what they are doing and that they are open with you about what they are doing.

Remind them of key online safety principles

There are too many to list, but remember human behaviour is the same online and offline. Remind them that they should only post things online that they wouldn't mind you, their teacher or a future employer seeing.

Remind your children to be a good friend, to ask for help if they are worried or if someone is mean, not to get undressed on camera and most important of all... if somebody tells them not to tell or ask for help because it's too late or they will get in trouble, **that is a lie!**

Keep talking

Stay interested in what they're doing online and discuss what they might have come across. Don't be afraid to tackle difficult subjects like cyberbullying and sexting. Help them to be critical of things they see online and judge the quality and reliability of online sources.

Check if it's suitable

The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook and Instagram. If you are unsure about which learning sites they should be accessing, contact the school.

If you aren't sure, ASK!

If you have concerns - contact the school by emailing the school and someone from our Safeguarding Team will be in touch. But there are plenty of other places to ask for help as a parent or a child, whether it is for advice or help to fix something. Lots of sites are listed at [London Grid for Learning](#), including ones to tell your children about (they might not want to talk to you in the first instance).

Useful links to support you further are:

- [Support for parents and carers to keep children safe online](#) - Government publication which outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to find support and advice.
- Further government guidance on [staying safe online](#) which includes information on security and privacy settings.
- [Thinkuknow](#) provides advice from the National Crime Agency (NCA) on staying safe online.
- [Parent info](#) is a collaboration between Parentzone and the NCA providing support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations.
- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support.
- [Internet matters](#) provides age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world.
- [London Grid for Learning](#) has support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online.
- [Net-aware](#) has support for parents and carers from the NSPCC, including a guide to social networks, apps and games.
- [Let's Talk About It](#) has advice for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online, including parental controls offered by home internet providers and safety tools on social networks and other online services.