

Advice for healthy digital lives

Establish good working practice habits now (as a family) that will remain with you throughout your online life and digital profile.

- a. Spend time to update **filters and privacy settings** – on all devices and all individual apps – updates to apps restore default settings so you need to reset privacy settings regularly .

For “How to guides” for each app

- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/resources-parents-and-carers>
- <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parental-controls-offered-your-home-internet-provider> How to set up filters on your home intranet

- b. Monitor for **age appropriate activity** on screen – films, games, you tube etc – think legal and personal appropriateness

- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- <https://pegi.info/> Helps parents make informed choices when buying video games

- c. **Set limits** on game time / social media use etc. Use apps to monitor screen time eg

- <https://screentimelabs.com/>
- Screen Time for Apple IOS
- Google Family Link for Android

- d. Establish clear **boundaries between work and non-work times** eg keep social media away from work time, don't be tempted to write or answer messages during work time.

- e. **Avoid the temptation of multi-screening** – concentrate on one screen at a time – nothing playing on the phone, or constantly replying to messages while you are working on the computer. Place the phone in another room during work time if necessary.

- f. Take **regular breaks** away from the screen – eg every 50 minutes for 10 minutes. This includes taking regular exercise, reading, keeping regular sleeping hours – see the school health-check guide (to follow).

- g. Create a **productive working space** – see Work Space guidelines.

- h. Watch / do things **together** – find films etc that are family friendly

- i. **Establish zones in the house and times where there are no screens** – eg meal times, one hour before bed, not in the bedroom.

- j. **Online streaming** – when choosing to use devices for video calls, for social or work purposes check

- a. The background is benign – posters on walls, documents on the desk, off screen conversations not overheard, etc

- b. Nothing can be seen inadvertently that is inappropriate eg bedrooms, family members walking from the bathroom in a towel etc.
- c. Cameras are covered when not in use.
- d. Meetings are not recorded without consent.

- e. Limit the temptation for unlimited **in-app purchase** - Check how each game / app works, what can be "bought" (eg skins, avatars etc), agree limits, and ensure your credit card details are not shared to be used without individual purchase permission by the card holder.
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-technology>

- f. To facilitate **safe gaming** take an interest in what games are being played, how they work, how is connected, how purchases are made etc
- <https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/money-for-nothing-the-cost-of-online-gaming/>

With extra time and enforced limits on movement it may be hard to limit screen time and thus raises the prospect of potential conflict within families and the opportunity for young people to make mistakes online. We suggest you establish family guidelines at the beginning of any isolation period. They can be tweaked but buy-in will be important for adherence.

1. Encourage children to report any suspect activity on the platforms they are using
2. Without judgement but for information ask your child to explain what apps they use, what they are watching, how their games work, what they can do on the social media sites, who they can interact with etc
3. Share passwords and access accounts with younger children in order for them to have them.
4. Monitor activity for age – appropriateness.
5. Talk about their digital profile – what they post will remain with them online forever, but outside of their control. Employers/admissions officers will scan their online profiles (pictures, posts, likes, who they follow etc) before offering them a job or a place at University.
6. Talk about what you would do as a family if things went wrong – if inappropriate pictures were shared or received with or without consent. How this could be handled without punishment or retribution with the overall aim as damage limitation.

Other resources include:

- a. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- b. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- c. <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
- d. <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides>
- e. <https://swgfl.org.uk/about/subscribe/> Subscribe to their monthly newsletter
- f. <https://swgfl.org.uk/online-safety/10-online-safety-tips/>
- g. <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
- h. <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/>
- i. <https://www.internetmatters.org/>
- j. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

AMTR

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Top tips for 11-19s <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

1. Protect your online reputation: use the services provided to manage your digital footprints and ‘think before you post.’ Content posted online can last forever and could be shared publicly by anyone.
2. Know where to find help: understand how to report to service providers and use blocking and deleting tools. If something happens that upsets you online, it’s never too late to tell someone.
3. Don’t give in to pressure: if you lose your inhibitions you’ve lost control; once you’ve pressed send you can’t take it back.
4. Respect the law: use reliable services and know how to legally access the music, film and TV you want.
5. Acknowledge your sources: use trustworthy content and remember to give credit when using others’ work/ideas.

Be aware of the risks

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Sexting and sending nudes

Advice if you're worried about a child sending, sharing or receiving nude images.

[Learn more](#)

Talking to your child about online safety

Tips on how to start the conversation with your child.

[Learn more](#)

Inappropriate or explicit content

Advice on how to support your child if they've seen something online that's upset them.

[Learn more](#)

Online games

Learn about the risks of online games and how to protect your child.

[Learn more](#)

Livestreaming and online video apps

Advice to help you understand the risks and keep your child safe.

[Learn more](#)

Online porn

How to support your child if you're worried they're watching porn online.

[Learn more](#)

Internet connected devices

Advice on how to make internet connected toys and devices safe for your child.

[Learn more](#)

Parental controls

How setting up parental controls can help keep your child safe online.

[Learn more](#)

Net Aware

Your guide to the latest social apps, networks and games.

[Learn more](#)

Online safety issues

See advice on a range of online issues that your child may face to help them enjoy the digital world safely and smartly.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/>



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is one of the most far-reaching issues facing children today. Support your child with expert advice.

SEE ADVICE HUB



Inappropriate content

Learn how to protect your child from a range of inappropriate content that they may have a negative impact on their wellbeing.

SEE ADVICE HUB



Online grooming

As children become more relaxed about talking to strangers online, it's important to talk about the potential risks and how to stay safe.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Online reputation

A child's online reputation can be affected by what they publish and post online. See tips to help them develop a positive digital footprint.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Online pornography

Online pornography and sexualised imagery are easily accessible on the internet, learn how to protect your child from stumbling across it.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Sexting

Sexual messaging and image sharing between children and their boyfriends or girlfriends or people they've met online can have unwanted consequences for children.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Screen time

Learn more about the impact screen time can have on children and how to make the most of it to support your child.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Self-harm

Children can use the internet to educate themselves about self-harm and connect with pro-self-harm communities.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Radicalisation

Children can be introduced to ideas online that may be considered extreme and become radicalised, see what you can do to prevent this.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)



Privacy & Identity theft

A child's identity can be stolen just like an adult's can, so it's important to ensure your child understands the importance of personal data privacy.

[SEE ADVICE HUB](#)

Setting Family Rules (and sticking to them)



Learn about it

Familiarise yourself with the issue your child may be facing or that you are concerned about.



Talk about it

Tips on how to have positive conversations about specific issues; keeping the dialogue honest and open.



Deal with it

Practical help to deal with the issue.

Suggested Family / House / Home Rules

Avoid the use of devices becoming divisive

- **No screens before school.**
- **No screens 30 minutes before bed.**
- **9hrs uninterrupted sleep.**
- **Drop zones for all mobile devices.**

- Adults set the example, and follow the rules.
- Screen time is earnt as a reward, not a right, and can be taken away as a punishment.
- Active viewing. Choose what you watch, with a purpose, not to pass time.
- Set the time at the beginning of the activity (sand timer / app).
- 20 minutes one on one with your child/ren EVERY DAY- no distractions.
- No phones during prep. Outside the room.
- No screens in bedrooms. Charge them in a different room, buy an alarm clock.
- Passwords shared with parents for our safety.
- Agree which sites / games / social media accounts I can have.
- I will tell my parents if I feel uncomfortable online.
- My Friends are all people I know in person.
- Don't share personal information online, even with friends.
- Don't post anything that you wouldn't want grandparents to see.

E Safety Facts - Staying Safe Online

What is Online Safety?

It can be called E Safety (or e-safety), Online Safety or Internet Safety, but it all means the same thing. It's about risk; it's about being aware of the possible threats that online activity can bring, and how to deal with them.

These risks are grouped into four categories:

1. Conduct: children's behaviour may put them at risk
2. Content: access to inappropriate or unreliable content may put children at risk
3. Contact: interaction with unsuitable, unpleasant or dangerous people may put children at risk
4. Commercialism: children's use of platforms with hidden costs may put them at risk

The [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has broken these [online safety risk categories](#) down in more detail.

Talking to Children about Online Safety

This can be a daunting prospect, but it's important. Your kids need to know they can talk to you if something does go wrong.

Talking to them about their online activity in the same way you would do about anything else will help them to relax and, if anything is troubling them, they'll be more likely to tell you about it.

We've got some guidance at our '[Keeping Children Safe Online](#)' page, and in our 'Parenting in a Digital Age' series, in the '[It's good to talk](#)' article.

Bullying

Online Bullying, also referred to as cyberbullying, is using technology (including phones, messaging tools, e-mail, chat (including within games) or social networking sites to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. While grooming, predation and similar activities often cause the most concern for parents, it's a sad fact that bullying is one of the most common issues young people will face online.

The Ofcom research states that about 20% of children aged eight to 15 have been bullied in some way, and that for older children (aged twelve to 15), bullying incidence is consistent between 'real life' (16%) and online (14% on social media, and 12% in messages apps).

We've got some [cyberbullying advice for parents and carers on the UK Safer Internet Centre website](#).

Sexting

Sexting, or 'sending nudes', is sharing intimate content with another person, and includes anything from texts, partial nudity right up to sexual images or videos.

We've developed a resource – '[So You Got Naked Online](#)' - that offers children, young people and parents advice and strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents.

Gaming

E-Safety fact: Online gaming can use games consoles, mobile phones or tablets, and PCs, and can be played on apps and websites, as well as traditional game media like cards and discs.

Many games include messaging for gamers to chat with each other. Some are integral to the game, and others are bolt-on apps, like Twitch.

With the range of platforms and types, parents and carers need general advice, as well as guidance for specific gaming environments.

Our 'Parenting in a digital age' series includes an article on '[The real cost of online gaming](#)', which provides some general information around things to be aware of in relation to gaming. We've produced some specific guidance [for PlayStation](#) and [for Xbox](#) too.

Online Video

Online video can be pre-recorded (like YouTube) or 'livestreamed' in real time (using apps like Twitch, or social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook).

YouTube is the biggest and most widely used video service. Over 400 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute, so there's a wealth of great content that kids can access. Of course, there is also inappropriate content, and parents have a couple of options to control what children can watch.

[YouTube Kids](#) is an app-based approach, available for both Android and Apple iOS devices. Aimed at younger users, it uses a mix of automated Google filters (who own YouTube), review by moderation teams, and feedback from parents.

For older children, or use on a wider range of devices, YouTube Restricted Mode is an additional setting which can be enabled on the YouTube website and app. If enabled it restricts the availability of potentially mature or objectionable content. We've written [a parent's guide to YouTube Restricted Mode](#), setting out the things you can do to help your child stay safe when they're watching YouTube.

Harmful Content

Harmful content is anything online which causes a person distress or harm. What may be harmful to one person might not be considered an issue by someone else, but we generally talk about eight types of harmful content:

1. Online Abuse
2. Bullying or Harassment
3. Threats
4. Impersonation
5. Unwanted Sexual Advances (Not Image Based)
6. Violent Content
7. Self-Harm or Suicide Content
8. Pornographic Content

We have a special service, called [Report Harmful Content](#), that provides advice about all types of harm online, and helps you find the best way to deal with it.

Devices

We've already touched on some of the devices used for gaming, and looking more broadly at internet access, we see the dominance of the smartphone: [according to Statista, over half of internet usage in the UK is via a smartphone](#), with the laptop in second place at about 20%.

The advice some years ago was to locate your computer in a family space, but that's not applicable to phones and other very portable devices.

Tools like [Google Family Link](#) for Android devices, or [Screen Time](#) for Apple iOS devices can help: you can set up controls around screen time limits, bed time, and restrict installation of apps.

Our '[Young People and Screen time – A Good Start](#)' provides tips to help parents and carers get kids off to a good start using digital devices.

Parental Controls

You can also look at setting up parental controls on your Wi-Fi, which can block access to inappropriate or adult content, as well as set time limits on internet usage. The UK Safer Internet Centre has produced a guide to '[Parental controls offered by your home internet provider](#)'.

It's worth thinking about the wider context of this too. Our '[Parenting through technology](#)' article (part of the 'Parenting in a digital age' series) has some interesting points.

Social Media

Social media is the term used to describe the websites and apps that allow the creation or sharing of social information. They're interactive, promote the creation and sharing of content, and join up each person (or more accurately, each person's profile) with others in 'social networks'.

For kids, social media services mean they can keep in touch with friends, connect with new people, and share photos and videos with each other.

There are risks too, including:

- Seeing inappropriate or harmful content
- The promotion of harmful or illegal behaviour or conduct
- Sharing too much information, or picking up incorrect information
- Inappropriate contact with other young people or adults

You can download checklists for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Roblox and TikTok from our [social media checklists page](#). The checklists will help parents to understand more about each platform, what information they use, and how to set privacy settings: they're a parent's social media survival guide!

You should also have a look at [our 10 Internet Safety Tips for staying safe online](#).