



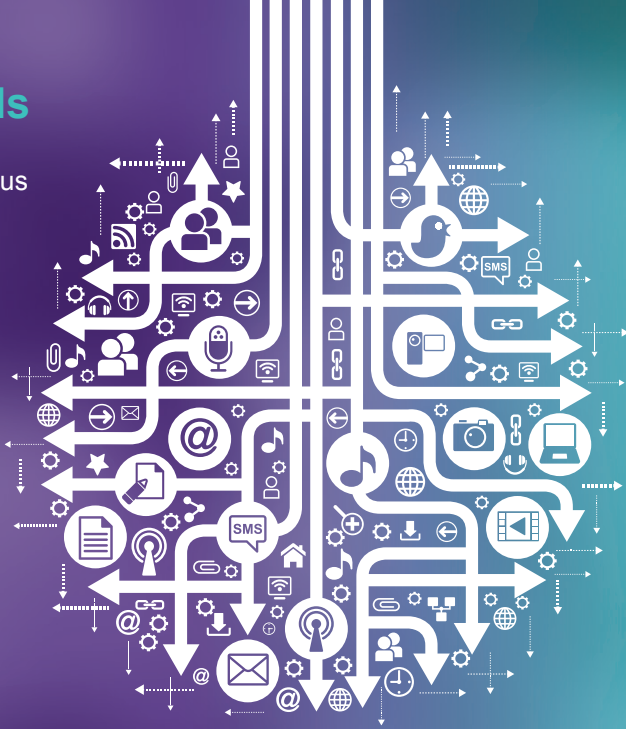
Young People & Online Safety

Advice for parents and carers

Young people have been born into a digital age. They use technology as part of their everyday lives. They can seem to be expert online, but young people do not have the life experience of adults and need your support. You can help by talking and listening to your child about what they do online and providing unconditional support.

Develop digital skills

Swimming pools can be dangerous places, so we teach children to swim. Crossing the road can be dangerous, so we teach children road-safety skills. We do not stop children swimming or crossing roads! In the same way, we must teach children to be safe in the online world, so they can have fun, communicate, create and learn. We must also be aware of the danger signs so we can deal with any situation.



Benefits of online access at home

Many studies have shown that there are benefits to having access to technology and the Internet at home. These can include:

- Supports homework and revision. Improves students' achievement. Makes learning more fun and creative. Provides access to a wider range of learning materials.
- Offers young people choice in what they learn, when they learn and how they learn.
- Connects learning at school with learning at home.
- Using technology at home and at school develops skills for life.



Some useful guidelines to use when you talk to your child about online safety

- Be respectful online. Just because you can't see a person doesn't mean that you can't hurt or offend.
- Think about those selfies! Think before you share or forward anything. Once you upload comments, pictures or videos, others will be able to see or capture them.
- Everyone has a right to protect their privacy. Don't upload pictures or videos of others without their permission.
- Be careful not to share private, personal information about yourself, friends or family online.
- Play virtual BUT live real! Computer games are fantasy and many gamers 'pretend' to be something they are not online.
- Create a nickname when using games or websites - rather than using your real name.
- Be careful about popups and adverts that say "you have won" something! This is usually a scam.
- Be wary of links and attachments. If in doubt, do not open or click on them. People try to get hold of your details and it could be a computer virus.



- Use complex, hard to guess passwords so your accounts cannot be 'hacked' easily. Treat passwords like your toothbrush – don't share!
- Think carefully about where you go online. Not all content is genuine. Content can be unfair, biased or just nasty.
- Think before downloading music, videos or games. Respect the creators - so don't download illegally.
- Only use a webcam with people you really know offline. A video can expose you to embarrassment or danger.
- Know how to secure your profiles on social networks and how to block and report people.
- Know how to turn off your location on devices or set to private.
- Never arrange to meet an online 'friend' without a trusted adult.
- No one should ask you, or put you under pressure, to do something which feels wrong or makes you uncomfortable. Listen to 'your gut'.
- Know the danger signs that someone is trying to 'groom' you.
- Tell an adult you trust immediately if anything makes you worried or unhappy.
- If you think it's serious, report it to CEOP.



Online (cyber) bullying

Unfortunately, people can use technology to bully others. So be aware if your child's mood changes. If they are being bullied, support them. Follow it up. Keep the evidence. Contact your child's school for help. Contact the website owner or phone company if necessary. Get advice from an organisation such as BullyingUK or Childline.



Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection to gain trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or extremist exploitation. Groomers can be any age and may be other young people who are just a few years older. Young people may do things because they are simply exploring their understanding of the world or because they feel under pressure, bullied or think everyone does it. Some grooming can be for sexual reasons, so talk to your child about loving, caring, respectful relationships and sex.

Some grooming can be for political, extremist ideological reasons which can be harmful to the young person or people they know. Get advice from an organisation such as NSPCC or CEOP.

Sexual 'selfies'

Talk to your child about appropriate 'selfies' or images to share online and the risks of posting risqué photos or videos. No one should ever ask for naked pictures. Don't be afraid to discuss with your child's school.



Danger signs you should look out for

If your child is:

- Using technology excessively.
- Staying online through the night.
- Being secretive about what they are doing.
- Behaving very differently in what they wear and how they feel about their self-image.
- Significant changes in their attitudes or their relationships with friends.
- Become very withdrawn or socially isolated offline.
- Receiving gifts or money from unknown sources.

These signs may all be perfectly innocent of course, but remember to always talk to your child. Be supportive.

Danger signs your child should know about

Beware if someone:

- Tries to find out your address or contact details or where you 'hang out'.
- Wants to keep their chats with you secret.
- Shares information, pictures or videos with you and tells you not to tell anyone else about it.
- Sends you pictures or videos which make you feel uncomfortable and you are worried about showing them to anyone else.
- Asks you to send them pictures or videos of yourself or asks you to use a webcam in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.
- Pays you lots of compliments and offers or gives you gifts.
- Say that only they are telling you the truth and that family, school and media are lying.
- Tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell an adult.



Tips for parents

Take age-appropriate precautions

- Discuss as a family appropriate 'boundaries' or 'rules' for using technology.
- Get advice from your child's school about age-appropriate links and content.
- When out and about in public places, look out for the filtered Friendly WiFi service.
- Check the age rating of the games your child plays. There is help from organisations such as Common Sense Media.
- Understand game and video (PEGI) ratings. PEGI doesn't reflect the difficulty or challenge in a game. They take age, level of violence, sex, fear and content including drugs, bad language and gambling into account.



Put in sensible technical solutions

Most Internet Service Providers (ISP) and mobile phone companies offer filtering systems and parental controls to help you safeguard your child at home or on the move. Find out how these work from your provider, or see support online such as Safer Internet Centre.

Bear in mind what older siblings might be showing their younger brother or sister. Be aware of your own behaviour, as children copy their parents. So agree some rules as a whole family. There are help guides from organisations such as ConnectSafely and BBC webwise.

Filter / block / stop = short-term protection
Develop digital skills = protection for life



Trust & Resilience

It can be surprisingly easy for young people to access inappropriate material, mostly accidentally. So try to develop trust. It is most important that your child feels able to tell you if they find anything inappropriate, do something 'wrong', or they get inappropriate or unwanted attention from someone.

There are some issues such as online gambling or sites that promote being very thin for example, that your child could also be affected by. If something happens, don't over-react. Young people experiment and make mistakes. Stay calm.



Listen & Learn Together

Encourage debate and questioning, particularly on local and world events and help them see different points of view. Help them understand that what they see or read may not be the whole picture.

Using all of these tips will build a young person's resilience.
A resilient child will cope with challenges better and ask for support when they need it.

Talk to your child: Conversation starters

What app (or site) are you using?

Who can you talk to when on the site?

What can you do on it?

What's so fun about it?

Who uses it at school?

Why do you like this app (or site)?

Who are your friends on it?

How did you meet them?

Some useful websites for parents

Internetmatters: www.internetmatters.org

Parent INFO: www.parentinfo.org

Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

Connect Safely: www.connectsafely.org

BBC WebWise: www.bbc.co.uk/webwise

Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org

Childnet: www.childnet.com

BullyingUK: www.bullying.co.uk

Age rating of games: www.commonssensemedia.org/game-reviews

PEGI ratings: www.pegi.info

Mental Health: www.youngminds.org.uk

Tackling extremism: www.activechangefoundation.org/

<http://www>



Surf smart & stay SAFE!



If you have concerns

Talk to your child's school.

Report any serious abuse using the national CLICK CEOP link. This takes you to a site managed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).

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