

Keep your child safe online

With the amount of technology out there, it is now more important than ever to keep your child safe online.

We want to protect our children from any dangers and we teach them about stranger danger from a very young age but are we doing enough to keep them safe online? Do we remember the same concept of stranger danger and apply that online?

We appreciate that although the internet does help us and has a number of tools that we can use it does also have its disadvantages.

Some of the online dangers that young people may face is cyber bullying, grooming, inappropriate websites, indecent images, addiction, hacking, sexting, harassing, exploitation, predators.

Statistics change all the time but there is approximately 1.2 billion people who play games worldwide. Of those about 700 million play online games out of which a large number are adults.

There will always be new apps and new games that are available but safety tips will remain the same. Always check what apps your child uses. Search for it, download and install it so you can check for yourself and are aware of the risks.

Here are some safety tips for you to protect your child

- 1) Have you given your child a mobile phone? Although there is no legal age for when your child can have a mobile phone, please question if you really think your child needs one and what impact that might have on them.
- 2) Make a note of their IMEI number which will be unique to their mobile. You can do this by dialling *#06#
- 3) Have they put a password on their mobile? Let them know that you need to have it so you can monitor it. Your child may feel like you don't trust them, but it is others around them that you have reservations about.
- 4) How long is your child on their mobile phone? Is it in their possession at all times? Take their phones off them at night. Your child needs their sleep which might be affected if they are reading or answering messages or waiting for friends to reply to their messages.

Keep your child safe online

- 5) There are a number of apps out there which do have an age restriction. The main ones are WhatsApp (16 and over), Snap chat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, musical.ly and Houseparty (13 and over). If you allow your child to use these apps and they are underage, you are responsible for them and may be spoken to if an offence is committed when they use them.
- 6) There are many more apps out there. All these apps are updated and may contain features that could impose dangers. For example, Snapchat has a feature where other users can have access to your child's location. Even by adjusting their setting on ghost mode it is still possible to locate children by using the app. The key point to remember is whatever app they are using there will always be other users who have access to their accounts.
- 7) It is vital that your child does not put photos of themselves on any social media platform (website or app). This is to protect them. Once a photo is out there, there is no way to completely delete it. Some risks could be with them taking photos with their uniforms on. This would allow others to identify which school they go to. If your child takes pictures of themselves at home, it may show other siblings in the background. Taking pictures of themselves at the park may show other people where they hang around.
- 8) Whatever app your child has, ensure that their settings are set to private.
- 9) If your child takes a photo of themselves and it is an indecent image they can be arrested if they are 10 years old and over. The sentence could be 10 years imprisonment. If they then send that photo on (even if they thought it was a laugh) then they commit an offence of distributing indecent images of a child. The next child or person that then opens their device and sees that image and forwards it on has committed another offence and is in possession of an indecent image of a child. If your child does notify you that they have sent an indecent image, please inform us and do not forward that image on. The police do not look to criminalise young people and look at every individual case in context.
- 10) YouTube has the legal age of 18 and above and this is because of the content that can be uploaded on there. The content is not appropriate and often adverts which are on display can also be of concern. If your child has viewed something that is not appropriate then YouTube will allow other

Keep your child safe online

material of similar nature and recommend that. Please ensure your child uses YouTube Kids.

- 11) If they are on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook always be cautious because it is so easy for people to set up fake accounts. Ensure their setting are on private and that they have not got people following them that they don't know.
- 12) Ensure that they are not alone in their room on their phones or other devices for too long.
- 13) Put a bit of blue-tac or cardboard over the camera on your child's phone or computer/laptop/tablet so if they are playing online games then they can't be seen.
- 14) Turn the volume off on their headsets to protect them from hearing others they don't know.
- 15) There are a number of games out there such as Minecraft or Roblox. Ensure your child is not playing single player with people they don't know. Turn the chat mode off so that no one can have a conversation with them.
- 16) There are also a number of games that are rated 18. They are 18 for a reason. For example, games such as Grand Theft Auto has content where the characters swear, drink, have sex, act out violence, etc. If in doubt play the game yourself first so you are aware of the nature.
- 17) Whatever your child is on be at mobile phone, PSP, a tablet, computer, X Box or any other device the safety tips remain the same.

There are a number of agencies available for internet safety advice.

Some of these are:

- [NSPCC.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk) and [SaferInternet.org.uk](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
 - For Safeguarding
 - Report abuse
 - Services

Keep your child safe online

- NSPCC helpline

NSPCC could also help you if you are not sure how to make your settings private on your devices

- Thinkuknow.co.uk
- CEOP videos are available on YouTube

You could also report any abuse direct to the makers of the apps. You can block people as well if messages are being sent by an unwanted person.

Lastly, it is important that your child knows that they can talk to you if needed. These safety tips are just to ensure that you are aware of some of the risks and it is about finding a balance with your child. We are not advising that you ban them from using every device. If you do this they could easily go to a friend's house and get access to them. It is essential that you are aware of some of the risks that are there on line.