

PARENTAL ONLINE SAFETY FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/>

Start with some general tips:

1. Guide your family in the digital world in the same way you do in day-to-day life - including not being afraid to set boundaries and rules for your children from a young age. Here are some questions that you could ask them at the outset, then raise them again and again as they get older and develop new online interests and activities. Use them as a base for discussion:
 - What are your friends doing online?
 - What are the newest and best websites and apps?
 - Can you show me your favourites ?
 - Do you know what cyberbullying is, and have you ever experienced it in any way? Or have any of your friends?
 - Has anything you've seen online ever made you feel weird, sad or uncomfortable?
2. Try out some of the technologies your child enjoys for yourself. You could ask them to help set you up on Facebook (if you don't already have a page), or play on the games console together.
3. Discuss with your friends, family and other parents about how they help their children to progress and keep safe in their digital world. You might be able to exchange some interesting tips and even help them out too.
4. Ensure you know how to use parental controls on computers, mobiles and games consoles, privacy features on social networking sites, and the safety options on Google and other search engines.
5. Find out about software you can buy or download to keep children safe online, for example Norton Family, which helps you monitor web activity and prevents kids from trying to delete visits from their history.
6. Having said that, try not to rely purely on technology to babysit your child online. Use it to help you set limits.
7. As your kids grow up, make sure they are aware of the 'basics' of online safety such as not clicking on links in emails or instant messages, good password practice and not turning off antivirus programmes and firewalls.
8. Talk regularly with your child about their and your online lives. Show them that you understand how important technology is to them and talk about all its benefits, but don't be nervous about things like responsible online behaviour, bullying and pornography.
9. Sometimes as parents we have to take a step back and remember just how young or old our children are and what is the 'right thing' for people of their age.

We've prepared some simple checklists to help you keep your kids safe online according to their age group. Click on your child's age to find out more:

[Under 5 years](#)

[6 – 9 years](#)

[10 – 12 years](#)

[13 years and](#)

[over](#)

Advice if your child is under 5 years old

- Start setting some boundaries, even at this early age ... it's never too early to do things like setting limits for the amount of time they can spend on the computer.
- Make sure devices like your mobile, tablet or laptop are out of reach. Set up passwords/PINs and make sure you keep these details to yourself.
- On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age, and enabling access to only appropriate content.
- Buy or download parental control software, switch it on and keep it updated. There are many versions on the market, which work in different ways and available at a range of prices, starting at free.
- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Buy or download only apps, games, online TV and films which have age ratings, which you should check before allowing your child to play with or watch them.
- Share your technology rules with grandparents, babysitters and your child's friends' parents so that they know what to do when looking after your child.
- When using public WiFi - for example in cafés or hotels - remember that it might not include parental controls. Innocently letting your child play with your mobile or tablet while you're enjoying a latte may result in them accessing inappropriate content or revealing personal information.
- If you have a family computer or tablet, set the homepage to an appropriate website such as Cbeebies

If your child is aged 6 to 9 years old

- On computers and any other devices your child has access to, set the parental controls to the appropriate age, and enabling access to only appropriate content.
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- The big four Internet Service Providers (ISPs) give their customers free parental controls which can be activated at any time. Check them out and take advantage of them.
- Agree a list of websites your child is allowed to visit and the kind of personal information they shouldn't reveal about themselves online, such as the name of their school or their home address.

- Set time limits for activities such as using the internet and games consoles.
- Make sure your child is accessing only age-appropriate content by checking out the age ratings on games, online TV, films and apps.
- Discuss with your older children what they should or shouldn't be showing their younger siblings on the internet, mobile devices, games consoles and other devices.
- Discuss with other parents subjects such as what age to buy children devices that connect to the internet.
- Don't be pressured by your child into letting them use certain technologies or view certain online content, if you don't think they are old enough or mature enough... no matter how much they pester you or what their friends' parents allow.

Advice if your child is aged 10 to 12

- Set some boundaries for your child before they get their first 'connected device' (mobile, tablet, laptop or games console). Once they have it, it can be more difficult to change the way they use it or the settings.
- Tell your child that it's very important to keep phones and other devices secure and well hidden when they're not at home, to minimise the risk of theft or loss.
- Discuss with your child what is safe and appropriate to post and share online. Written comments, photos and videos all form part of their 'digital footprint' and could be seen by anyone and available on the internet forever, even if it is subsequently deleted.
- Talk to your child about the kind of content they see online. They might be looking for information about their changing bodies and exploring relationships. They also need to understand the importance of not sending other people - whoever they are - pictures of themselves naked.
- Remember that services like Facebook and YouTube have a minimum age limit of 13 for a reason. Don't bow to pressure, talk to other parents and their school to make sure everyone is in agreement.
- Explain to your child that being online doesn't give them anonymity or protection, and that they shouldn't do anything online that they wouldn't do face-to-face.

Ask them

Do you really know everybody on your 'friends' list?

Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings?

Can you show me how?

Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them?

Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online?

Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say?

Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were?

These pages have been compiled with the kind assistance of Norton and Neighbourhood Watch

* This helpline will give advice to parents on how they can keep their children safe online, answer questions about online safety and give advice on parental control software. Online safety experts can also give advice on what the free parental control software Norton Family can offer, and how to set it up, if required. The helpline is provided by Norton by Symantec and is open from 9am-9pm Monday to Friday.

Get switched on about:

- *The best approach*
- *Viruses & other malware*
- *Clickjacking*
- *Privacy & identity theft*
- *Cyberbullying*
- *Cyberstalking*
- *Protecting passwords*
- *Texting & sexting*
- *Safe browsing*
- *Copying & cheating*
- *Music, movies & file sharing*
- *Gaming*
- *Social networking & instant messaging*
- *Parental control software*