

For parents and carers



Keeping children safe online

Children love using technology and are learning to navigate websites, online games and consoles, and touch screen technology like iPads and smartphones from a young age. Children need support in these environments, to get the best out of using the internet right from the start.



Where do I start?

The best way to keep your family safe online, and to understand your children's internet use, is to use the internet together. Be positive and embrace the technologies that your children enjoy using, and look out for any safety features that may be available.



Should I set any rules?

Creating a family agreement is a useful way to establish your expectations regarding online activities. It might include time spent online, sites that can be visited, and behaviour expected; remember, what's right and wrong offline is also right and wrong online.



How can I supervise my child?

Placing your computer or laptop in a busy part of the house can make it easier for you to be involved in your child's technology use. Portable devices, for example smartphones, iPod Touch, games consoles and tablets can still be supervised and used where you can see them.



How much time is too much time?

There are some strategies that can be used to help manage time spent online, such as agreeing time limits or using time limiting tools, designating weekly times to use the internet together, or removing portable devices from your child's bedroom at night to avoid tiredness.



Are there tools to help?

Your internet service provider, and your mobile phone operator, will provide free filters to help block age inappropriate content for children. The websites of device manufacturers (e.g. games consoles) also outline the controls to which you have access. Parental controls are a great help, but not a complete solution, and work best in combination with supervision and engagement, to help your children understand how to stay safe online.



What advice can I give my child?

Education is the best tool that a child can have, so discuss the importance of telling an adult immediately if someone, or something, upsets them online. Other immediate strategies to deal with unwanted content or contact could include; switch the screen off, close the laptop, exit the website, or turn the iPad or phone over and put it down. It is also important that your child realises that other internet users may not be who they say they are and that 'friends' made online are still strangers, so all personal information should be kept safe.



What games are ok for my child to play?

There are many different online games and playing experiences, e.g. computers, consoles, internet games and apps. Gaming may be the first way that your child encounters life online. Some games however are for older audiences and contain language or images that are not suitable for children. Therefore it is important that the games your children play are the correct age rating, which is determined by the game's content.

Playing games yourself can be fun and will also enable you to identify the safety features provided, such as reporting to a moderator, and help you identify whether in-app adverts are displayed or purchasing is allowed. You can disable 'in-app' purchasing on a number of devices within the settings.



Where can I report?

Reports can be made to websites through safety/help centres and moderation services. If you are suspicious about the behaviour of others online, reports can be made to CEOP and inappropriate media content, online and offline can be reported via Parentport. Criminal content online can also be reported to the IWF.



For the full advice, visit [childnet.com/parents-and-carers](https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers).