Online Safety: A Parent's Guide

The internet offers children endless possibilities to connect, communicate, create and learn, but with that comes the inevitable challenge of staying safe. It can be hard to keep track of changing technologies, but there are simple steps you can take to keep your child safe online.

THE BASICS

- Decide if your child is mature enough to use the internet without supervision or to have their own mobile device *(such as a smartphone or iPad)*. If in doubt, wait. If you go ahead, have clear rules in place.

- Have an open relationship with your child about online safety and have regular discussions on safe and responsible use.

- Only allow your child to use social networking sites or apps *(such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc.)* if they are mature enough. Most social networking sites expect that users are age 13 or over.

- Agree the hours when your child can access the internet and schedule the timings in the settings of the device(s) they use *(so that it automatically blocks access during the hours when they are not allowed to go online).*

- Ensure your child leaves their device with you at night and at home when they are at school.

- Take the device off them when they need to complete homework or revise for exams.

- Make sure you understand parental controls available.

- Set restrictions on their device so they can only access appropriate content.

- Check their internet browser history regularly.

- Set limits and boundaries with your child. Reinforce online safety guidance regularly.

- Report serious incidents to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre *(www.ceop.police.uk)* or phone 999 for immediate help.

- Ask the school for help if needed.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental controls can be used to block upsetting or harmful content, control in-app purchases or manage how long your child spends online.

BROADBAND AND MOBILE NETWORKS

Broadband, mobile and WiFi providers *(such as BT, Sky, TalkTalk, EE etc.)* offer free network-based parental controls to limit inappropriate content. They differ by provider but most will enable you to block certain websites or set the times of day that your child can access the internet.

MOBILES, TABLETS AND GAMES CONSOLES

Pre-installed parental controls are available for most smartphones, tablets, laptops and game consoles, and are part of the system when you buy them. You can download additional parental control apps and software to supplement these controls, but the most important thing is to set the controls on the device itself. When using parental controls, make sure to check things like location settings and what information your child is sharing with others. Some controls in games consoles may allow you to deactivate the internet in games or turn off chat functions.

APPS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRIVACY

It can be hard to keep track of all the apps and social networks that are available and what they do, but it's always important to look at the privacy settings. Some apps let you manage who can see content and how you interact with others. Many also include reporting functions to flag abusive or inappropriate content.

SEARCH ENGINES AND ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORMS

Internet search engines and many entertainment platforms, such as BBC iPlayer, allow you to set up controls and filters with varying levels of maturity to protect your child from inappropriate or adult content.

CHECKING A BROWSER HISTORY

All browsers maintain a list of recently visited websites, called the 'browser history'. This is easily viewed and will show you a list of all web searches and websites that have been visited.

Google Chrome: Press **Ctrl + H** to view browsing history. Scroll down to view entries, or look for a specific website in the **Search history** box at the top.

Firefox: Press **Ctrl + H** and the browsing history appears on the left. Enter a website in the **Search history** bar or click the drop-down arrow next to 'View' to search by date, most visited, last visited and more.

Internet Explorer/Edge: Press **Ctrl + H**. Click the drop down box to search by date, site, most visited and visited today.

Safari *(for iPhone or iPad)*: Click on the 'book' icon in the toolbar at the bottom of the screen. Click on the History tab *('clock' icon)* and the browser history will appear on screen.

FAQ

How should I report a serious incident?

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) exists to keep children safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. It is part of the UK National Crime Agency. If your child has experienced sexual or offensive chat that has made them feel uncomfortable or someone is trying to meet up with them, you can report this directly to CEOP. This may have happened in a chat room, message board, instant messenger or on a social networking site. It could be a mobile phone, games console or computer. It could be messages, images or conversations over a webcam. The important thing is that if an adult is making sexual advances towards your child on the internet, you should report it to CEOP. Remember if you need immediate help about a serious incident then phone 999.

How can the school help with online safety?

All schools are required to teach children about online safety and we cover it as part of our curriculum. If you are worried about the online safety of your child, or about an incident involving a pupil, please phone the school.

Where can I find further help and support?

There are many online safety resources for parents available online, including the following: www.thinkuknow.co.uk Thinkuknow is the education programme from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre. It provides useful resources for parents and children, including online safety games.

www.internetmatters.org

Internet Matters provides tools, tips and resources to help children and parents stay safe online, including how to guides about managing internet access and monitoring usage. www.saferinternet.org.uk The UK Safer Internet Centre is a partnership of three charities and provides information for children, parents and teachers.

www.nspcc.org.uk

As well as providing an online safety area on its website, the NSPCC also provides an online safety helpline for parents. Whether you have a specific question, want some general advice on online safety or social media, need help setting up parental controls or adjusting privacy settings, they can help. You can phone the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5002.