

Staying safe online: Advice for parents and carers

As schools are currently closed to most pupils, daily routines have changed, with many working and studying from home. Most children have a positive experience online, accessing educational resources and entertainment and connecting with friends and family. Spending time online can be very beneficial for children, particularly at the moment, but we recognise that many parents may worry about online safety.

It is important for children and young people to stay both connected and safe online. Below is some useful guidance and links to areas of further support.

Make use of parental controls

If you have downloaded new apps or bought new devices like web cams or tablets, remember to adjust the privacy and security settings to suit you.

There is technology to help you manage the content your children can access:

Government has encouraged Internet Service Providers to help parents easily filter content. [Switch on family friendly filters](#) to help prevent age inappropriate content being accessed on devices in your home.

Parental controls put you in control of what your child can see. Internet Matters has [step by step guides](#) on how to set these up.

If you are concerned or upset about something your child has seen online

Seek support from the online platform using the report function on the app or website - you can often find these in the 'help' section or 'settings' or seek support from other organisations and helplines.

The UK Safer Internet Centre offers a service, [Report Harmful Content](#), which you can use if you are not satisfied with the result of a report.

Have a conversation with your child about staying safe online

Reduce the risk. The UK Council for Internet Safety has [guidance](#) on minimising children's exposure to risks online.

Talk to your child. **Childnet** has [guidance](#) for parents and carers to begin a conversation about online safety and [Ditch the Label](#) teacher resources that can be helpful for parents to discuss cyberbullying and the government also has [helpful advice](#). Encourage your child to speak to you or a trusted adult if they come across content that makes them uncomfortable.

If you have concerns about specific serious harm, this [guidance outlines how to protect your child](#) from child sexual abuse online, 'sexting' or radicalising, pornographic or suicide content.

Stay safe and healthy

You may be concerned about how long your children are using their devices. The government has published [guidance for parents and carers](#) on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19.

The UK's Chief Medical Officer has also provided [advice on screen time](#). Here are a few of the tips to help your children strike a balance:

- **Sleep matters** - Getting enough good quality sleep is very important. Leave phones outside the bedroom when it is bedtime.
- **Sharing sensibly** - Talk about sharing photos and information online and how photos and words are sometimes manipulated. Parents and carers should never assume that children are happy for their photos to be shared. For everyone – when in doubt, don't upload!
- **Talking helps** - Talk with children about using screens and what they are watching. A change in behaviour can be a sign they are distressed – make sure they know they can always speak to you or another responsible adult if they feel uncomfortable with screen or social media use.
- **Keep moving!** - Everyone should take a break after a couple of hours sitting or lying down using a screen. It's good to get up and move about a bit.
- **Family time together** - Screen-free meal times are a good idea – you can enjoy face-to-face conversation, with adults giving their full attention to children.
- **Use helpful phone features** - Some devices and platforms have special features – try using these features to keep track of how much time you (and with their permission, your children) spend looking at screens or on social media.

If you are still worried and need help please make contact with your child's year group PSA. Detail can be found [here](#)