

# The internet - An inspiring and positive place

The internet is amazing. It is a wonderful resource which enables children and young people to connect, communicate and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of different devices. It can often feel like your child has a better understanding of the internet and better technical skills than you do but they still need guidance and advice when it comes to managing their lives online.

## Contact

It is important for children to realise that new friends made online may not be who they say they are and once a friend is added to an online account, you may be sharing your personal information with them. To help keep your children safe:

- Use strong passwords, fun usernames and avatars
- Regularly check friends lists and privacy settings

If you have concerns that your child is, or has been, the subject of inappropriate sexual contact or approached by another person, it's vital that you report it to the police via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre ([www.ceop.police.co.uk](http://www.ceop.police.co.uk)).

If your child is a victim of cyberbullying, this can also be reported online and offline. Reinforce the importance of telling a trusted adult straight away if someone is bullying them or making them feel uncomfortable or if one of their friends is being bullied online.

## Conduct

Children need to be aware of the impact that their online activity can have on themselves and other people, and the digital footprint that they create on the internet. It is easy to feel anonymous online and it's important to be aware of who is able to view and share posted information. Remind your children to:

- Stop and Think before you post, once something is online, it can be extremely difficult to remove
- Keep personal information safe and think about what you are sharing

Discuss with your child the importance of reporting inappropriate conversations, messages, images and behaviours and how this can be done. Also talk about sharing concerns that they might have about a friend or peer's activity online. Remember to take photos or screenshots of the inappropriate content as a record of the incident.

## Commercialism

Young People's privacy and enjoyment online can sometimes be affected by advertising and marketing schemes, which can also mean inadvertently spending money online, for example within applications.

Encourage your child to keep their personal information private, learn how to block both pop-ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchases on devices where possible and use a family email address when filling in online forms.

## Content

Some online content is not suitable for children and may be hurtful or harmful. This is true for content accessed through social networks, online games, blogs and websites.

It's important for children to consider the reliability of online material and be aware that it might not be true or written with bias. Children may need your help as they begin to assess content this way.

There can also be legal consequences for using or downloading copyrighted content, without seeking the author's permission.

## Conversation starter suggestions

1. Ask your children to tell you about the websites and apps they like to use and what they enjoy doing online.

2. Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is ok and not OK to share.

3. Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find safety advice, privacy settings and how to block or report via the service they use.

4. Think about how you all use the internet. What could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities you could enjoy together?

## Useful Links

To check your Internet Service Provider settings or how to set up parental controls and privacy settings visit <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide/> or <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parental-controls-offered-your-home-internet-provider>

For useful guides on applications visit [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)

To check how secure your password is visit [www.howsecureismypassword.net](http://www.howsecureismypassword.net) or for advice on internet security visit [www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)

To report illegal content especially offensive images visit [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)