

Online Safety

Key issues

There are a number of key issues that we need to be aware of when considering online safety for children and young people:

Cyber bullying

Children can be subjected to a range of online bullying and can feel isolated as a result of it. Be aware of changes in your child's mood or behaviour. Talk to them if you're concerned and ask about their online activity.

Online grooming

People can create any identity they like online. Online groomers build up a relationship to the point where they ask for inappropriate things or to meet in person. Over a third of children admit to adding people they don't know to their social media contacts.

Sexting

Similar to online grooming, sexting is where someone asks for a picture of a sexual nature to be sent via MMS or through social media.

Inappropriate content

A great deal of content is age restricted for a good reason. More and more children are exposed to unsuitable content for their age. This can be damaging to a child's development. Pornographic content can warp a young person's expectations when it comes to relationships.

Addiction

Constant exposure to gaming and social media can become addictive and damaging. It can lead to poor decision making in both life and finances.

Radicalisation

Extremist ideology is often spread online. Any content which encourages racism, terrorism or other radical acts must be reported.

Social media

Social media sites and apps can be a great tool for networking and keeping in touch. However, there are inherent dangers for children and young people when not used safely.

Some hints and tips for keeping your children safe when using social media.

1. Be involved in your child setting up and using social media accounts.

This includes chat rooms available through children's toys such as Moshi Monsters etc.

2. Ensure privacy settings are correct.

These can include photo permissions, location tags, who can see their comments. Every device and app has options for privacy.

3. Tell them not to add people they do not know.

Online identities can be created by anyone.

4. Tell them not to share any personal data whether voluntarily or at someone's request.

This includes where they live, school, age etc.

5. Explain that anything they put online is permanent.

They won't be able to take something back if they post it by mistake, even if they delete the post off their own profile.

6. Set boundaries for limited use.

Use the parental controls listed below to set appropriate boundaries on time and access.

7. Agree access to their device or computer to be able to see their activity.

8. Ensure they know how to report any unwanted activity.

See our points on how to respond and make sure you discuss these with your children.

Parental controls

Parental controls aren't just about blocking inappropriate content, it's also about managing how and when your children go online. For more detailed information visit www.internetmatters.org

1. Home broadband restrictions

Many internet providers have facilities on the routers they provide. These allow you to set passwords for accessing the wi-fi, blocking unsuitable content and time restrictions on using the internet.

2. Devices and Computers

Tablets and computers have varying levels of parental controls that can be set. Some tablets have time restrictions and computers have username permissions which grant different abilities to different users.

3. Apps and programmes

As well as the device, individual apps and programmes require parental controls setting separately. For example, BBC iPlayer allows you to set a 4 digit pin for content age 16 and over. Also, controls to prevent purchase of apps and 'in-app purchases' can be set also.

Remember that parental controls aren't just digital. Having house rules such as not allowing phones at the dinner table are really useful!

Restricting your child's time on gaming devices can also prevent them from becoming isolated or addicted.

Responding

It is essential to teach yourself and your children how to respond. Here are some ways you can respond to

Online safety concerns:

Speak to your organisation's safeguarding coordinator. You should do this especially if the issue involves someone in the organisation in a position of trust. They will act on your information in accordance with their safeguarding policy.

Go to the 'Child Exploitation and Online Protection' centre which can be found at www.ceop.police.uk Here you can report any abusive or suspicious online activity.

Keep evidence – Don't delete any evidence that could be required by the police. In the case of child pornography make immediate contact with the police.

Don't respond. Block all contact.

Don't attempt to respond to anyone causing online abuse. Block any future messages or requests using the app or programmes settings.

Resource: [Online Safety Flowchart](#)

Useful contacts

Here are some useful websites and resources when dealing with the area of Online safety:

A really useful website with detailed information on e-safety issues and how to manage them.

www.internetmatters.org

The national police platform for reporting online abuse.

www.ceop.police.uk

A useful website teaching safety for child on a range of issues including the internet.

www.safetynetkids.org.uk

An advice site and phone service that children and young people can use to talk through their problems.

www.childline.org.uk

08001111

Thinkuknow is Ceop's online resource for educating different age and people groups.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

The naked truth project is a resource to help educate about the damaging impact of pornography.

www.thenakedtruthproject.com