GROWING UP IN AN ONLINE AGE

ADVICE, INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

September 2019

E SAFETY IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Computing curriculum started from September 2014 with the safety strand playing a vital role in its delivery. Internet safety is included in the Programmes of Study for all Key Stages to help ensure that young people are "responsible, competent, confident and creative users of information and communication technology."

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

Key stage 1

Pupils should be taught to use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

Key stage 2

Pupils should be taught to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly; recognise acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact

CHILD INTERNET SAFETY RESEARCH FINDINGS

For young people the internet, and the increasing number of digital devices they use to connect to it, is an integral part of their everyday lives. Whether they use it to express themselves or to stay in touch with friends, for entertainment or education, the internet can provide tremendous benefits and most use it safely. But while digital technology provides a wealth of opportunities, we are all aware that there are online risks and sometimes these risks can lead to harm. At the same time, while young people’s ‘offline’ and ‘online’ worlds are often merging, the behaviours and safeguards of the ‘real’ world are not always applied in a ‘virtual’ world where friends can be added at the click of button and information shared in an instant. EU Kids Online is a research project which surveyed 25,000 children and their parents across Europe to understand the true online risks and opportunities. Here are some of the main online risks alongside the findings from two key reports – EU Kids Online II and the Ofcom Media Literacy Study 2011.

Privacy

* 12% of children have experienced data misuse such as identity theft or somebody using their personal information in a way they didn’t like
* 13% of 12-15 year olds are happy to share their email with ‘friends of friends’ or ‘anyone’. Children are happier to share photos and feelings online compared to sharing personal contact details.
* Around 25% of 8-15 year olds with a social networking profile have it set to open, either to anyone or to friends and their friends.
* 41% of 12-15 year olds have a smartphone and around half use it for social networking on a weekly basis.

Grooming

* 29% of children in the UK have had online contact with people they had not met before.
* 12% of 8-11 year olds and 24% of 12-15 year olds say that they use social networking sites to communicate with people not directly known to them.
* The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) receives more than 600 reports of grooming a month

Sexual images

* 11% of children in the UK have encountered sexual images online and 12% of 11-16 year olds have received them

Cyberbullying

* 21% of UK children say they have been bullied and 8% say this occurred on the internet

Harmful content

* 19% of UK 11-16 year old internet users have seen one or more type of potentially harmful user-generated content, rising to 32% of 14-16 year old girls

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A COMPUTER EXPERT TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE.

You can help your child become a responsible, ethical digital citizen with healthy online relationships. To do that, you’ll use the same successful parenting skills that you’re already using at home. Resilient digital citizens recognize and seek out the 4Cs—appropriate contact, content, commercialism and conduct—in all digital settings (e.g., iPods, iPads, instant messaging, chat, computer games, game consoles, cell phones, text messaging and webcams).

WHAT ARE THE KEY ONLINE RISKS?

Contact: children can be contacted by bullies or people who groom or seek to abuse them

Content: age-inappropriate or unreliable content can be available to children

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own behaviour, for example, by sharing too much information

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising in apps, games and websites

HAVE A CONVERSATION

It is really important to chat with your children on an ongoing basis about staying safe online.

Not sure where to begin? These conversation starter suggestions can help:

1. Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit 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 the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.
4. Encourage them to help someone! Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.
5. Think about how you each use the internet. What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities that you could enjoy as a family?

SHARE THESE RESOURCES WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

To start a conversation about staying safe online, perhaps you could read our storybooks or watch a short film together.

SAFETY TOOLS ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OTHER ONLINE SERVICES

Most online services offer some safety features that can help you manage access to age-inappropriate content, report concerns or protect privacy.

It is a good idea to think about the sites and services your family uses, and check out which features these sites have that might be helpful for you. Talk to your children and make sure they know how to use the tools on the sites and services they use.

SMART TVS

Smart or connected TVs are TVs with integrated internet capabilities. Smart TVs allow you to watch TV, as well as being able to browse the internet and to watch catch-up TV. It means you can watch Youtube on your TV, or Netflix, if you have paid for such an app. As of 2015, most TVs in the shops nowadays are smart TVs.

THREE STEPS FOR PARENTS:

1. For your home internet: All home internet providers offer free parental controls tools that can help reduce the chances of your child coming across something inappropriate while browsing the web. If you are worried about the type of content your child might search for on your smart TV, if you have parental controls put in place on your WiFi router, these parental controls will also be applied to the browser of your smart TV.
2. On all your TV on demand apps: If you would like to restrict your children from watching certain TV programmes that you find unsuitable, you can see the parental controls on TV on demand services which allows you to restrict certain apps or programmes and put in place a pin code to ensure your children aren’t watching inappropriate content.
3. For faster streaming, ensure your TV isn't placed too far away from your router.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Find out more about the safety features available on these popular social networks:

FACEBOOK

Facebook is a social network that is popular globally with over a billion users. It has a range of safety features and advice, including advice about how to deal with concerns and how to protect your privacy.

Safety advice

<http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/online-safety/parent-s-guide-to-facebook/>

INSTRAGRAM

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app that is popular with teens. People on Instagram can connect with one another through comments, captions and hashtags on photos and videos.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is an ephemeral messaging app that is popular with teenagers which allows them to share user-generated photos, texts and videos, ie ‘snaps’. Once a ‘snap’ is sent to someone else, it can last on the screen of the receiver for a matter of seconds before disappearing. There is also a feature called ‘Snapstory’ where you can put your ‘snaps’ on your ‘story’ for more than one person to see for 24 hours.

TWITTER

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging site where users post 'tweets' that are 140 characters long and can include images or videos. There are a range of safety features available on the service.

WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is a free mobile messaging app which allows users to send and receive messages, images and videos to their existing phone contacts, using an internet connection. WhatsApp users can create groups and send messages to lots of their friends at the same time.

YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video-sharing website that is owned by Google. There are a range of safety features such as reporting tools and restricting access to inappropriate content in Safety Mode.

PARENTAL CONTROLS OFFERED BY YOUR HOME INTERNET PROVIDER

How to set up filters on your home internet to help prevent age inappropriate content being accessed on devices in your home. The 4 big internet providers in the UK – BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media - provide their customers with free parental controls which can be activated at any time. They have come together to produce these helpful video guides to help you to download and set-up the controls offered by your provider. Click on the links below to find the appropriate video:

BT: <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls/bt>

SKY: <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls/sky>

TALKTALK:<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls/talktalk>

VIRGIN MEDIA: <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls/virgin-media>

We know that children, particularly younger children, can be bothered by things they see online, and filters can be a helpful tool in reducing the chances of coming across something upsetting.

Remember that filtering is only part of the solution

No filter or parental controls tool is 100% effective, and many of the risks that young people face online are because of their own and other’s behaviour. It is therefore important to talk to your children about staying safe online with your child and make sure they know that they can turn to you if they get into any difficulty.

Devices that connect to your home internet

In addition to content filtering offered by your ISP, many devices such as games consoles, smartphones and tablets have their own parental controls, for example to limit spending or restrict access to apps based on age rating. Likewise, many web browsers have built-in tools and features to help you control the kinds of content users can view.

[](http://www.friendlywifi.com/)Staying safe when out and about

If children are taking their devices out of the home, it's worth bearing in mind that they could connect to public wifi, for example, in a shop, cafe or restaurant. Look out for the Friendly WiFi symbol which shows that the wifi has filters in place to limit access to inappropriate content.

## STAYING SAFE ON MOBILES, SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS

Children can use mobiles or tablets anywhere – from their bedrooms to when they're out and about - so it can be tricky to keep track of what they're doing online. You may want to think about:

Location tracking

Smartphones and tablets have a GPS (Global Positioning System) facility that shows their location. Some websites and apps like [Facebook](https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/facebook) can use this to publish the user's location. So when a young person posts a message or photo on a social network, their location may also be added. Location settings can also be used to find others close by - for example on dating or social networking apps.  Talk to your child about why they might want to use location settings and what the risks might be. You can also help them switch them off if necessary.

### Taking and sending pictures

Cameras on smartphones and tablets let children take and send photos instantly. Sometimes this means they don't take a moment to think before they share images. Sometimes children and young people use their smartphones and tablets for [sexting](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/)– taking and sending explicit pictures of themselves. But as soon as they send the image to another person, they lose control over where and how that image is shared. Teach your child to be [Share Aware](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/) and help keep them safe online.

### Using the device too much

You might worry that your child uses mobile devices too much. Although they can be good for children's social lives, they can also stop them from talking to people face to face. There are also concerns about how they affect concentration, sleep patterns and eyesight for very young children. The important thing is to get the balance of activities right. Agree the times that your child can go online and avoid just before bedtime.

### Parent protection apps

Installing parent protection apps on your child's smartphone or tablet can help you keep track of what they're getting up to. Features vary from app to app, but they include things like:

* alerting you if your child tries to access a blocked site.
* keeping a record of text messages they send and receive.

You can also set times when the device can and can't be used. Try to strike the right balance between keeping an eye on your child and giving them the independence and freedom to explore. Simply sheltering them from the online world might not help them in the long run. They need a chance to learn how to behave online, and find out what's out there.

PARENTS’ GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY

This guide has been created to answer these questions and introduce some of the most popular devices, highlighting the safety tools available and empowering parents with the knowledge they need to support their children to use these technologies safely and responsibly.

Smartphones are mobile phones with internet access. They are capable of a range of functions, including social networking, listening to music, playing games, browsing the internet, checking emails, taking photos and videos and watching TV – along with the usual texting and calling!

You can personalise your phone by downloading ‘apps’ which carry out fun and useful functions, from checking train times to caring for a virtual pet! According to Ofcom, the most popular types of apps among young people are for games, social networking and music.

Internet safety advice is directly applicable to smartphones because risks of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commercialism also apply:

Content: age-inappropriate material can be available to children

As smartphones have internet access, the risks that young people face online also apply to smartphones. There are also apps which contain content that may be inappropriate for young people, for example of a sexual or violent nature. As these devices can be used for listening to music, playing games and watching TV, films and videos, you should think about whether all of this content is suitable for your child.

Contact: potential contact from someone who may wish to bully or abuse them

Smartphones provide a wide range of communication channels – calling, texting, instant messaging, social networking, video calling, chatting to other players in games and emailing to name a few. This is great for young people, who love to socialise, but these channels can also allow unwanted and hurtful contact. Smartphones can be used by bullies, and young people can make themselves vulnerable to contact by those with a sexual interest in children, particularly if they share their personal information.

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own and others’ behaviour

Young people may get into difficulty if they don’t think about the consequences of the information they share, which may damage their online reputation or leave them open to contact from someone who may want to bully or abuse them. Equally, passing on gossip, photos or information among friends can be a form of bullying, so children need to think before they post or send anything.

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising

There have been cases where children and young people have got into difficulty by inadvertently running up bills when buying apps and making in-app purchases. In addition, online and in-app advertising have increased massively over the last few years, with mobile advertising more than doubling during 2010. However, many young people are unaware of targeted advertising, especially if it comes in the form of a game app.

GAMING DEVICES

Children and young people love playing games. In fact, it is often through games that children first start to use technology. According to Ofcom, 41% of young people aged between 5-15 have a games console in their room.

Handheld Games: Handheld games are played on small consoles. Some of the popular handheld consoles are the Nintendo DSi, 3DS, Sony PlayStation Portable (PSP) and the PS Vita. These devices can access the internet wirelessly, and allow for playing games with others online.

Consoles: These devices, like the PS3, PS4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Nintendo Wii and WiiU, are designed to work with a TV. Consoles like these are capable of connecting to the internet via a home internet connection just like other computers. This allows users to download games or 'expansions' to existing games as well as playing online, although a subscription may be required for this. All of the three main manufacturers (Nintendo, Sony and Microsoft) include parental control functions in their consoles that are linked to age ratings systems.

From sport related games to mission based games and quests inspiring users to complete challenges, interactive games cater for a wide range of interests, and can enable users to link up and play together. Games can provide a fun and social form of entertainment often encouraging teamwork and cooperation when played with others. Just like offline games, they can have educational benefits, helping to develop skills and understanding. Today's games consoles have in-built wireless so they can connect to your home internet or other wifi hotspots. This enables a wide range of online functions, such as playing with or against people online (in a multi-player game), viewing films and TV, storing photos and music, browsing the web and chatting to friends. Internet safety advice is directly applicable to gaming devices because risks of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commercialism also apply:

Content: age-inappropriate material can be available to children in games and through online services

Some games might not be suitable for your child's age - they may contain violent or sexually-explicit content. The quality of graphics in many games is very high, so the games can appear very realistic. Many devices allow users to browse the internet, and watch films and TV, and some of the content available is not appropriate for children.

Contact: potential contact from someone who may wish to bully or abuse them

Many games allow gamers to play against people online, potentially from all around the world. While gaming you can communicate with people by text, voice or video chat. This might mean your child is exposed to offensive or aggressive language from other players. Bullying can also happen, which is known as 'griefing' in games, when players single out others specifically to make their gaming experience less enjoyable. Young people can also make themselves vulnerable to contact by those with a sexual interest in children if they give out their personal details.

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own and others’ behaviour

Specific conduct risks for gamers include excessive use to the detriment of other aspects of their lives. This is sometimes referred to as 'addiction'. Gamers also need to think about their own behaviour and attitude towards other players, as well as the importance of not sharing any personal information.

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising

There have been cases where children and young people have got into difficulty by inadvertently running up bills when playing games online. Some young people may also not be aware of advertising in games, for example, within the game there might be a billboard advertising a real-life product, or the whole game might be designed to promote particular products or brands.

TABLETS

Tablets are on the rise. According to Ofcom 2014, almost twice as many 5-15 year olds are going online via a tablet than in 2013. iPods, iPads, Kindle Fires and a range of other tablets and media players can provide young people with fantastic opportunities for entertainment and education. By connecting to the internet, these devices carry out many functions and can bring a wide range of information to your fingertips (which is why some schools are now equipping their pupils with iPads). These devices, like smartphones, allow you to download ‘apps’ which carry out fun and useful functions, from checking train times to caring for a virtual pet! There are many educational apps for iPods and iPads, which you can find in the ‘Education’ section of the App Store.

Tablets, such as the iPad or a Kindle Fire, function much like a laptop. They can be used to view websites and social networking sites, check emails, download files, play games, take photos and videos, watch TV and films and listen to music, plus more! Many portable media players, such as the iPod Touch, do much more than simply store and play music. Media players with wifi connectivity can often be used to browse the internet, play games, watch web TV, stream online music, make online purchases, and if they have an inbuilt camera, take photos and videos. The newest iPod Touch even allows you to video call with the FaceTime app. Internet safety advice is directly applicable to internet-enabled devices because risks of Content, Contact, Conduct and Commercialism also apply:

Content: age-inappropriate material can be available to children

As devices like the iPad and iPod Touch have internet access, the risks that young people face online also apply. There are also apps which contain content that may be inappropriate for young people, for example of a sexual or violent nature. As these devices can be used for listening to music, playing games and watching TV, films and videos, you should think about whether all of this content is suitable for your child.

Contact: potential contact from someone who may wish to bully or abuse them

While they don’t allow texting and calling in the same way as phones, these devices do provide a wide range of communication channels – instant messaging apps, social networking (eg. Facebook), video calling, chatting to other players in games and emailing to name a few. This is great for young people, who love to socialise, but these channels can also allow unwanted and hurtful contact. Online communication can be used by bullies, and young people can make themselves vulnerable to contact by those with a sexual interest in children, particularly if they share their personal information.

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own and others’ behaviour

Young people may get into difficulty if they don’t think about the consequences of the information they share, which may damage their online reputation or leave them open to contact from someone who may want to bully or abuse them. Equally, passing on gossip, photos or information among friends can be a form of bullying, so children need to think before they post or send anything.

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising

There have been cases where children and young people have got into difficulty by inadvertently running up bills when buying apps and making in-app purchases. In addition, online and in-app advertising have increased massively over the last few years, but many young people are unaware of targeted advertising, especially if it comes in the form of a game app.

ADVICE ON CYBERBULLYING

It's hard to protect your child if you don't understand the problem with cyberbullying or see it happen. Parents need to be the ones their kids go to when something is wrong. However, parents are often the last ones to know about problems because their kids fear getting into more trouble. Here are practical tips to help parents prevent and stop cyberbullying.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

1. Keep the computer in a common area of the home. Do not allow it in your children's bedrooms. Monitor their online usage.

2. Learn how various social networking websites work. Become familiar with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Ask your children if they will show you their profile pages.

3. Talk regularly and specifically with your children about online issues. Let them know they can come to you for help if anything is inappropriate, upsetting or dangerous.

4. Build trust with your children. Set time limits, explain your reasons for them, and discuss rules for online safety and Internet use. Ask your children to contribute to establishing the rules; then they'll be more inclined to follow them.

5. Tell your children not to respond to any cyberbullying threats or comments online. However, do not delete any of the messages. Instead, print out all the messages, including the e-mail addresses or online screen names of the cyberbully. You will need the messages to verify and prove there is cyberbullying.

6. Don't overreact by blaming your children. If they are being bullied, be supportive and understanding. Find out how long the bullying has been going on and ensure that you'll work together to find a solution. Let your children know they are not to blame for being bullied.

7. Don't underreact by telling your children to "shrug it off" or just deal with the bullying. The emotional pain of being bullied is very real and can have long-lasting effects. Don't tease them about it or respond with a "kids will be kids" attitude.

8. Don't threaten to take away your children's computers if they come to you with a problem. This only forces kids to be more secretive.

9. Report inappropriate behaviours. Many website have report facilities that deal with cyberbullying.

Should you share pictures of your children online?

Are you a ‘sharent’?

For many children online life begins before birth, when their excited parents-to-be post ultrasound images on social media. According to research by Parent Zone in 2015, the average parent will share their child’s image online nearly 1000 times before their fifth birthday. As well as pictures, parents will share funny stories, information, or personal details, such as when their children’s birthdays are.

What are the advantages and disadvantages to sharenting?

The internet can provide fantastic tools for allowing special moments from your child’s early years to be shared with family and friends. And online forums, networks and blogs often provide valuable support and reassurance for parents at a time when it’s easy to feel isolated or under pressure. But parental sharing can affect children as they grow up. No longer is the embarrassment of baby snaps restricted to digging out the photo album when you first meet your teen’s new boyfriend or girlfriend. Sharing photos and information online is permanent, and what can seem appropriate to share now may not be in the future.

What should you consider before you share?

When did you last check your privacy settings? On most social networks the default is that any other service user can access your pictures, which may also appear in internet search results. Google your child’s name to review the information you post and the social networks you use. Remember that anyone who can see a photo can also download or screenshot it, and could go on to share it.

What else are you sharing?

You might be sharing more than what’s in the post. As default, many cameras, phones and apps tag posts and photos with ‘meta-data’ which can include location details and other identifying information. This is potentially risky for any child, but poses particular risks for vulnerable children such as those who have been fostered or adopted and could be sought online by members of their birth family.

Ownership

Under the terms and conditions of most social networks, when you share a photo you license the network to use and reproduce your image, and grant it the right to license it for use by third parties. Your picture could then be used for commercial purposes and you may be surprised to know where it could end up - in extreme cases printed on a mug and sold on the internet!

Your child’s digital tattoo

Every publicly accessible image or comment featuring your child contributes to a public image which will follow them into the future. That apocalyptic nappy incident might make for a hilarious tweet now, but if it comes to light when they’re older, how could it affect the way they feel about themselves, or you, or how others see them? Could their online childhood become an issue if they are seeking a job, or a relationship, or even election to public office?

Your child’s right to privacy

Once information about your children is on the internet it can be difficult for them to control it and so we need to be considerate when we share things on their behalf. Respecting this right to a private life now, and in the future, and involving them in decisions about what to post online once they are old enough, is not only good manners, it could also help them learn the importance of thinking before they share things on social media themselves.

Pokémon Go - a parent's guide

What is Pokémon Go?

A smartphone game featuring the infamous 90s characters that allows users to interact with the real world using the phone’s camera and GPS capabilities. Using augmented technology, the game allows players to catch Pokémon in real life. Players will see a map of their current location, super-imposed with their character and all of the game elements. Different types of ‘wild’ Pokémon will appear and users travel around the real world catching them.

Who do players interact with?

There’s no built-in chat function but the game encourages you to interact with other players in ‘the wild’. Gamers are highly likely to encounter other real life people while playing outdoors.

Is there an age limit for players?

You have to be 13 or over to download the app, according to the app’s terms and conditions.

How much does it cost?

You can download the game on Android and iOS for free and play it without making a single in-game purchase. But as players progress they might require PokéCoins to buy items such as Poké Balls. You can earn coins during the game, but it’s quicker to buy them.

Concerns for parents

* The general lack of awareness players have for the world around them can lead to accidents
* You need a Google account to play the game and there have been reports that the app is granting itself permission to access people's Gmail and Google Drive accounts.
* A malicious version of the Android app gives attackers full control over the victim’s phone
* Muggers have reportedly used the app to lure victims.
* Once your child starts playing, they probably won’t want to stop. Parents who have concerns over screen time beware!

Safety tips

* Try it yourself, or walk around with your child while they play it and ask them questions.
* If your child wants to venture out without you, make sure they go with friends. Players need to have location services set on their smartphones, so parents may wish to consider this when deciding whether or not to allow younger children out unaccompanied.
* Players don’t have to walk around while staring at the map on the screen. If a wild Pokémon appears near them the phone will vibrate to let them know.
* Players don’t have to visit a Pokémon’s exact location to capture it – you can stop at a nearby area where it’s safe (ie: not in the middle of a busy junction).
* Your child should choose a username that won’t identify either them or where they live.
* Use caution when visiting Pokéstops and gyms. Your child might make some new friends at these places but they need to be aware of the dangers.
* Be wary of ‘lures’ that players can buy with PokéCoins. They drop them at Pokéstops and Pokémon are lured to that stop for around 30 minutes. This gives people the power to lure a group of kids to a certain spot for 30 minutes.