



INTERNET SAFETY AWARENESS ADVICE FOR PARENTS & CARERS



Keeping up with and supervising your children's online activity can be challenging, especially when they have their own computers, smart phones, tablets and gaming consoles; there are steps you can take to safeguard your children from the various risks that come with access to modern day technology and the internet.

The first and most important step is to educate children from an early age about the responsibilities and being risk aware online; discussing appropriate use, personal responsibility, how to spot risks and what action to take. The level of discussion needed will vary according to age; however, topics should be regularly re-visited and adapted throughout your child's life to ensure consistent messages.

This information is intended to inform and support parents to develop a relationship with their child regarding access and use of the internet; communication is key to ensuring they remain safe, responsible and reassured that they can come to you if they are worried or things go wrong.

Set Ground Rules

Set rules and emphasize the trust you are giving; agree responsibility, expectations and consequences. Consider the following points to setting the ground rules with your child; they are intended to define roles, promote boundaries, safe use and personal responsibility.

I own and pay for it - you borrow it: *your device is a luxury I provide because I love and care for you. Remind them you are in charge.*

You're responsible for it: *you must look after the device; use it responsibly according to the rules*

I am responsible for you: *Respect is mutual. I must respect how much your device means to you and must respect how much you mean to me so I please understand my rules are for your welfare.*

You may lose access: *I gave you trust and we agreed the rules, if you make a bad decision you may lose your device for a while - it's also my job to help you learn, and avoid harm or trouble. Life isn't over... you can earn it back and learn from your errors, we all make mistakes.*

My decision is final: *We have agreed that respect is mutual; I do respect your online privacy but you must respect my job to keep you safe and well balanced, therefore my word is final on the following:
Access to your accounts: I will overlook things I am not searching for, it's my job to monitor your activity, know who you're speaking with and what you are accessing.
Turning it off: Turn the device off when I say it's time to turn it off, no excuses or tantrums please.*

Topics for discussion

Discussion will not only help build a relationship with your child about the internet, it can help you to assess their internet use and level of understanding; likewise it can help them understand your concerns and support them to develop their own judgement and actions to make safe choices. Explore your child's awareness of the dangers posed by the internet: ask them what sites they use/visit and what dangers they are aware of?

Common Sites: *list of common social networking, gaming sites, and media sharing sites.*

Animal Jam; Bebo; Blackberry Messenger; Club Penguin; Google+; Facebook; Habbo; Instagram; Minecraft; Moshi monsters; Play Station; Snapchat; Tumblr; Twitter; X-Box; You Tube

FAMILY ADVICE & SUPPORT



Grooming: sexual predators groom children online by posing as children

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of [sexual abuse](#) or [exploitation](#) (links to NSPCC)

Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know i.e. a family member, friend or professional, male or female, of any age.

Many children and young people don't realise or understand they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Explain that online contacts may not be who they say they are; you have no way of telling if you don't know them in the real world

Explain that some people on the internet may want to abuse, exploit or bully them

Never give personal information to people they meet online; especially where they live and go to school

Never meet up with anyone they have met on the internet

Explain what inappropriate contact is regarding language, behaviour and requests being made of them

If they want to give an email address to online friends, ensure they give a family one that you have access

Posting and Social Networking: anything shared online could be seen by anyone

Explain how they must keep personal details private

Information they share and make public can attract unwanted attention

They don't own what they post online, making it public means others may do what they want with it

Ensure they are clear about their own conduct as well as that of others; not to retaliate or exploit others

Discuss dangers of 'Sexting': sending or receiving sexually explicit films/images/messages of them self or others by mobile phone/media device; this can end up anywhere and can become a Police matter.

Inappropriate content: be aware the internet is a portal to things you may not want your child to see

Access to the World Wide Web (internet) is access to absolutely anything and everything!!! YouTube and other sites are a global platform for people to upload/post anything and is likely to contain inappropriate content that your child can access including sexually explicit, racist, violent, extremist, and other harmful material.

Viruses, Spam and Malware: can lead to 3rd parties obtaining personal information and pop-ups

Explain that they should never open emails from unknown sources

Only visit safe and secure websites (ask you if they are unsure)

Use filtering software to block inappropriate sites, pop-ups and spam emails

Be aware that children can unknowingly enable viruses & spyware by careless use of your computer.

Use the parental control settings on your browser, search engine and internet security package; or consider buying specialist parental control software.

Be aware of commercialism which directs aggressive advertising/marketing material to users

Tell them to ask you before filling out forms/surveys online

Reporting concerns: ensure your child knows what to do if they become worried or scared

Reassure them to talk to you and that you won't be cross at them



Ensure they are aware of other ways to report cyberbullying, exploitation or inappropriate behaviour; support is available online, by text or phone (refer to support section)

Safeguarding Advice

It is vital you are aware and share what your child does online to develop relations, keep them safe and reduce risk; as difficult as this can be, the following points can help safeguard them.

1. Insist they use their computer/device where they can be seen, not out of sight in their bedroom
2. Always sit with younger children when they are online, this encourages shared internet experiences and quality time together.
3. Set limits on when they can use the computer, and for how long
4. Encourage visiting internet safety education sites together to play games and learn current information; this creates common ground for discussion and understanding.

Remember: these factors will change as children grow up and should be reconsidered regularly. The above advice applies to use of mobile phones, tablets and games consoles.

Helpful Contacts

Childnet: Know-IT-All toolkits containing information on benefits, risks and safety on the internet

<http://www.childnet.com/>

Choose.net: useful advice on parental control software

<http://www.choose.net/media/guide/features/parental-controls-broadband-internet-safety.html>

Click Clever, Click Safe: developed by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/click-clever-click-safe>

Get Safe Online: UK government guide to internet safety <https://www.getsafeonline.org/>

NSPCC: Share Aware campaign contains safety videos for parents and children to watch together

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

ThinkUknow: Website for young people and their parents, guardians, and professionals; run by the UK's

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Switched on Families: Virgin & F-Secure have collaborated to provide family internet safety advice

<http://keepup.virginmedia.com/switchedonfamilies>

Language: Understand chat slang, acronyms, abbreviations, and emoticons used in social media.

Net Lingo: <http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php>; <http://www.netlingo.com/top50/popular-text-terms.php>

PC.net: <http://pc.net/slang/>

Webopedia: http://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/textmessageabbreviations.asp



Contact Hampshire Constabulary if you believe a child is at risk of harm