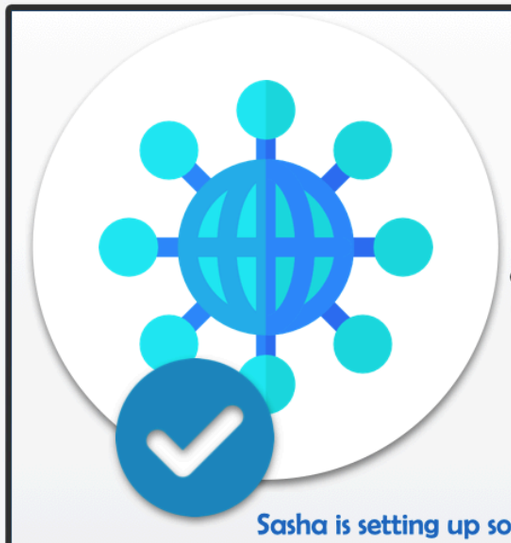
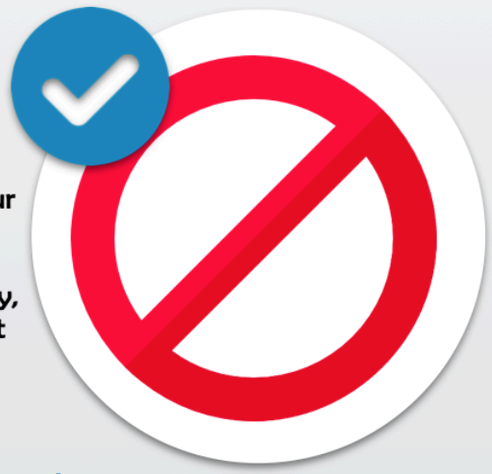


Sharing information on the Internet

If something is shared on the internet, for example on a social network, you have limited control about who sees it and how long it stays on the internet. Talk to your child about this and encourage them to think carefully about any videos, pictures or opinions that they may post online.

Sasha is setting up some information about herself on a website that her school friends also use. She is talking to her mum about what information she would like people to know about her and what she and her mum think should be kept private.

Dealing with upsetting content



Despite all the safeguards you put in place, your child may come across something which is frightening or upsetting online. If this happens, tell them to shut the device down or walk away, and speak to you or another grown-up straight away. Reassure them that they will not be told off if this happens to them.

John has clicked on a link that has led him to something upsetting. As he only uses his devices in the family areas at home, he can tell his mum straight away. She tells him to close down the device and has a chat to him about what he has seen and makes him feel less worried about it.

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Helping your child to Stay Safe Online

Parents often ask us for advice about helping to keep their child safe online. To help, we have written this guide for you and your child.

Strangers on the internet

Bullying on social networks

Find out what your child is doing on the internet

Protecting your child's device

There is now so much publicity and concern about inappropriate content on social media that parents often ask us for advice about helping to keep their child safe online. To help, we have written this guide for you and your child. Children are using electronic devices more and more, and following these steps will help you make sure that they are doing so safely and are aware of the potential risks.

Please read this leaflet through with your child and talk about the issues it raises. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns and we will help.

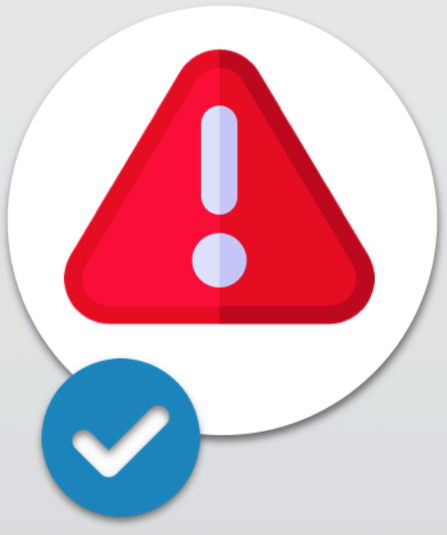
Strangers on the internet

Talk to your child about people that they meet on the internet. Tell your child to treat people on the internet the same way that they would treat strangers in real life. They may not be who they say they are. Even if your child regularly plays online games with them, they are not a real friend. So your child should not give out any personal information such as their address and phone numbers and they should not meet them unless it is under your supervision.

Amit is playing an online game with some school friends. They have a friend who they met online when they were playing their computer games. They know that he is not the same as a real-life friend so they do not chat to him and they never tell this internet friend any information about themselves.

Bullying on social networks

Unfortunately, sometimes children can be unkind to each other on social networks. It is very upsetting as so many people can see it. Talk to your child about this and encourage them to tell you, a teacher or another grown-up they trust, if anyone is putting mean and unkind things about them on the internet.



Someone has said something unkind about Sasha on a social network site. She is very upset and she has told her mum straight away. Her mum knows what to do and she has promised Sasha that she will sort it out and it will be OK. Sasha now feels a lot happier.

Find out what your child is doing on the internet

It is too easy for children to find inappropriate material on the internet. So you need to keep an eye on what your child is doing online. You can make this easier by having their devices in a busy part of the house so you can see what they are looking at. Make sure that devices have parental controls on them so you only give access to age-appropriate content. It is also a good idea to regularly check 'history' on their devices so you can see what pages they have visited.

John is looking on the internet to get information for his homework project. His dad is checking what he is looking at, and enjoying finding out what John has been learning. John enjoys sharing this with his dad and they now often do research together.

Protecting your child's device

There are so many ways that viruses can attack or access your computers and other devices. It is really important to protect all of your devices with anti-virus software and keep it up to date. Talk to your child about the risks of picking up viruses so that they take care on sites that they may visit. Also talk to them about the danger of opening links or attachments to emails, as they may carry viruses too. Where they have passwords, talk to them about keeping them secure (but share them with you) and choosing passwords that are difficult for anyone to guess.

Amit's dad has made sure that all the devices in their house have anti-virus software and it is up to date. Amit has set up a password to access a website so it is secure, but he has also shared it with his dad.

National Online Safety

7 questions to help you start a conversation with your child about online safety

#WakeUpWednesday

Publish date: 07/11/18

1 Which apps/games are you using at the moment?

THIS WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF THINGS YOUR CHILDREN ARE DOING ON THEIR DEVICES, ALONG WITH THEIR INTERESTS. REMEMBER THAT THEY MIGHT NOT TELL YOU EVERYTHING THEY ARE USING, SO IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO ASH THEM TO SHOW YOU THEIR DEVICE. BECAUSE NEW APPS AND GAMES ARE RELEASED REGULARLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION OFTEN TO ENSURE YOU ARE UP TO DATE WITH WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

2 Which websites do you enjoy using and why?

AS IN THE TIP ABOVE, ASHING THIS QUESTION WILL ALLOW YOU TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING ONLINE, AND ENCOURAGE POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITY. ASH THEM HOW THEY USE THE WEBSITES, AND TAKE AN INTEREST IN HOW THEY CAN USE THEM IN A POSITIVE WAY, ALSO ASHING THEM TO SHOW YOU IF POSSIBLE.

3 How does this game/app work? Can I play?

SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING. WHILST YOU ARE PLAYING A GAME OR USING AN APP WITH THEM, IT MIGHT HIGHLIGHT SOMETHING THAT THEY DON'T NECESSARILY THINH IS A DANGER TO THEM. IF THEY ACT LIKE THEY DON'T WANT TO SHARE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH YOU, QUESTION WHY.

4 Do you have any online friends?

CHILDREN CAN FORM POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE ONLINE, AND THIS HAS BECOME MORE COMMON THANHS TO ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS, BUT THEY MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FRIEND AND A STRANGER. YOU COULD MAHE THE QUESTION MORE SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILD. FOR EXAMPLE: "HAVE YOU MET ANYONE ONLINE THAT YOU LIHE TO PLAY GAMES WITH?" THEY MAY NOT WANT TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOU, SO ENSURE YOU TEACH THEM ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

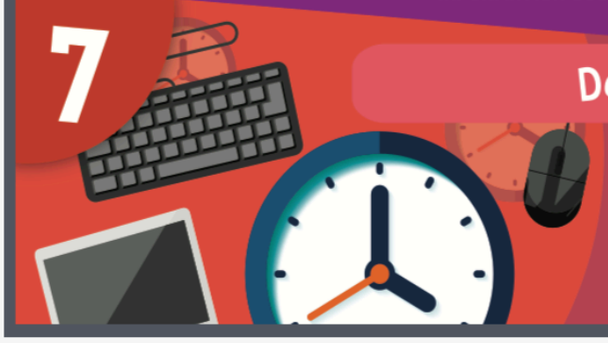
5 Do you know where to go for help?

ALTHOUGH YOU MAY BE THE ADULT THEY TRUST THE MOST, SOME CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO TALH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ONLINE DUE TO CONFUSION OR EMBARRASSMENT. BECAUSE OF THIS THEY MAY STRUGGLE TO APPROACH THE NORMAL PEOPLE WHO WOULD HELP, SUCH AS YOURSELF OR A TEACHER. HAVE A CHAT TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE THEY CAN GO FOR HELP, AND HOW THEY CAN REPORT ANY ACTIVITY THAT THEY BELIEVE IS INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE.

6 Do you know what your personal information is?

YOUR CHILD MAY ALREADY HNOW WHAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS BUT THEY MIGHT NOT THINH ABOUT HOW IT CAN BE SHARED. HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION IS AND HOW THIS CAN AFFECT THEM IF IT IS SHARED BEYOND THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THE DANGERS OF SHARING CONTACT DETAILS OR PHOTOS, AS INFORMATION SUCH AS THIS CAN SPREAD QUICHLY ONLINE.

7 Do you know your limits?



CHILDREN MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEVICE OR GAME ADDICTION. TALH TO THEM OPENLY ABOUT HEALTHY HABITS AND ASH WHETHER OR NOT THEM SPENDING TIME ONLINE OR PLAYING A GAME IS AFFECTING THEIR SLEEP, PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL OR IF THEY ARE GENERALLY LOSING INTEREST IN OTHER ACTIVITIES. YOU MAY LEAD ON TO ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSING THE INTRODUCTION OF TIME LIMITS WHEN AT HOME.

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

1 PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.

2 PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES

You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

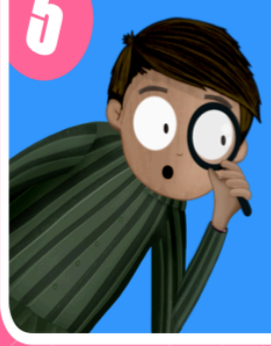
3 PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES

For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.

4 THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES

As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the Internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the Internet.

5 MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER



Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the Internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6 REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS

Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.

7 DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE

Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.

8 WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.

9 KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.

Part of our Online Mental Health & Wellbeing Series

NOS Online Mental Health & Wellbeing

Brought to you by National Online Safety®

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

What you need to know about...

AGE RATINGS

What are they?

'Age Ratings'

A game's age rating can be used by adults to make an informed choice as to whether or not a game is suitable for their child. The PEGI (Pan European Game Information) system rates games and, instead of indicating the level of ability required to physically play a game, it indicates the suitability of content for that age group. 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18 are the labels that can be awarded to games and a variety of content descriptors such as violence, bad language and fear are used to further clarify why the label was assigned.

Know the Risks

Inappropriate content

The biggest and most obvious risk of not following the age rating system is that children may view or hear age-inappropriate content. Many games now include scenes of a violent or graphic nature which could be upsetting or considered too intense for younger players.

Peer pressure

Peer pressure has a large role to play in age ratings being overlooked. Children don't want to be the ones left behind and can put their parents under pressure to allow them to play a game beyond the recommended suitability, especially when all of their friends are playing it already.

Level of 'Kudos'

Playing a game with a label that is higher than their age can be viewed by some children as a challenge and to gain a good reputation amongst friends. Kudos is attributed to the child playing the age inappropriate game resulting in more children wanting to follow suit.

Free Platforms

In order for a game to be released on popular platforms, such as PlayStation and Xbox, game developers must pay for a PEGI rating. However, smaller development teams are sometimes reluctant to pay these fees and games are often released on other platforms, such as Steam, without any age restrictions.

Spot the Signs

Being vague

Be aware of children being vague around the content of what they want to play. If they are unwilling to supply you with information about what the game is about, this can be an indicator that you wouldn't allow them to purchase it if you knew.

Unofficial sites

There are plenty of indie games that can be bought using online stores that don't necessarily have age restrictions. If you notice your child using sites such as GOG or itch.io rather than official channels such as the Google Play Store, they might be accessing games that aren't officially rated but still aren't age appropriate.

Unfamiliar terminology

Your child might start using phrases or terminology that is new to them or mimicking actions that they have learnt from a game without realising their inappropriateness.

Wanting to be secluded

Be aware if suddenly your child wants the move the device that they play their games on into a more secluded area of the house away from adults. It is a good idea for your child to play online games in shared area where you can see the screen.

Be aware of spending

Setting up accounts with online stores require bank account details. Keeping an eye on your bank balance means that you will be able to tell if there has been a new purchase and can provide you with an opportunity to ask about what new game they've purchased.

Safety Tips

Do your research

If you've noticed a new game that your child has downloaded then use quality resources to make sure that your knowledge is up to date. Online websites, such as National Online Safety, can provide you with the information you need.

Review parental controls

Review your parental controls on the stores where you buy games from. Most sites allow parents to set passwords to block games with certain age restrictions from being downloaded.

Encourage open dialogue

Encourage open dialogue with your child. You don't want to be in position where they won't talk to you if something has made them feel uncomfortable in a game because they are worried they will get in trouble for playing the game in the first place.

Discuss ratings

Talk to your child about why the game has been awarded a certain label. Debate the positives and negatives of playing a game and decide on some ground rules together.

Our Expert

Heather Cardwell

Heather Cardwell is a practising Online Safety Lead and senior school leader who is passionate about safeguarding online and educating children around online risks. She has over 10+ years as a Computing Lead and has successfully developed and implemented a whole school approach to online safety in schools, delivering online safety training to both school staff and parents and helping to roll-out a bespoke online safety policy across her local network of education settings.