

Safety on the Internet

- The Internet is a great place for children to learn and have fun at the same time but you should take measures to protect children from unsuitable sites. A firewall and anti-virus software are very important to stop damage being caused to your PC. Buy the best you can afford and update it regularly, then make sure you use it often. You can download free spyware and advert removing software from the internet itself.
- Keep an eye on what your children are doing, make sure they know what you will allow and what you won't allow.
- When using sites like Facebook or MSN, children can be misled by adults pretending to be younger. **NEVER** allow your children to pass on personal information, such as phone numbers or addresses, and **NEVER allow your children to meet with someone they have met through a chat site without an adult being present.**
- You can set your internet preferences to block certain types of site, often they are rated from low risk to high risk and you can select which level of security you wish, this may cause problems for older children who need access to sites which the firewall may block. You can change the settings on this and you can specify which sites are permanently blocked.
- The company you chose to provide your internet connection will offer a range of protection and it is advisable to take this up.
- E-mail is now the main means of contact for many children and adults. In school children are not allowed to access Hotmail accounts as we cannot guarantee the content of e-mails will be suitable. E-mails can contain virus' and cause damage to computers but also joke e-mails which are passed around the world may cause offence or may have unsuitable content. Junk E-mail can be blocked through such providers as Hotmail as can phishing e-mails. (These appear to come from reputable companies but are aimed at conning people by providing bank details or credit card details which can then be sold on. These people will try to access your bank accounts or use your cards.) All phishing e-mails should be reported and not opened. Any e-mails you are not expecting, or the sender is unknown should be deleted immediately without opening.

All this may sound scary but the internet has opened up a whole new world for many people, and communication is much easier as a result. If you take precautions your risk of fraud or seeing inappropriate content should be reduced.