

## Online safety advice

### Some basics

1. Have all chargers downstairs and have a cut-off time from screens.
2. Have all computers in a public place in the house.
3. If you know how to adjust your Wi-Fi settings exclude your children's devices from the Wi-Fi after 9 pm.
4. Reiterate that you bought the device and that it remains as your property.
5. Ensure that you know their lock codes, make this a requirement of having the device.
6. Make sure that they have to ask you to download apps to devices by password protecting iTunes play store etc.
7. When they ask check the advice online on the app <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
8. Don't be misguided about a young person's right to privacy over your role to keep them safe. Yes, it will cause arguments, but arguments are better knowing that you are protecting them.

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/10-to-12/>

### Advice if your child is aged 10 to 12

- Set some boundaries for your child before they get their first 'connected device' (mobile, tablet, laptop, or games console). Once they have it, it can be more difficult to change the way they use it or the settings.
- Tell your child that it's very important to keep phones and other devices secure and well-hidden when they're not at home, to minimise the risk of theft or loss.
- Discuss with your child what is safe and appropriate to post and share online. Written comments, photos and videos all form part of their 'digital footprint' and could be seen by anyone and available on the internet forever, even if it is subsequently deleted.
- Talk to your child about the kind of content they see online. They might be looking for information about their changing bodies and exploring relationships. They also need to understand the importance of not sending other people - whoever they are - pictures of themselves naked.
- Remember that services like Facebook and YouTube have a minimum age limit of 13 for a reason. Don't bow to pressure, talk to other parents and their school to make sure everyone is in agreement.
- Explain to your child that being online doesn't give them anonymity or protection, and that they shouldn't do anything online that they wouldn't do face-to-face.

Do you really know everybody on your 'friends' list? Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings? Can you show me how? Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them? Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online? Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say? Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were? Has anyone at your school, or anyone else you know, taken naked or sexy photos and sent them to other people, or received photos like that?

### Advice if your child is aged 13 or over

- It's never too late to reinforce boundaries ... your child may think they are adult enough, but they definitely still need your wisdom and guidance.

- You may be starting to think your child knows more about using technology than you do, and you may be right. Make it your business to keep up to date and discuss what you know with your child.
- Talk frankly to your child about how they explore issues related to the health, wellbeing, body image, and sexuality of themselves and others online. They may be discovering inaccurate or dangerous information online at what is a vulnerable time in their lives.
- Review the settings on parental controls in line with your child's age and maturity and adjust them if appropriate. They may ask you to trust them sufficiently to turn them off completely, but think carefully before you do and agree in advance what is acceptable online behaviour.
- Also, talk frankly to your child about how they behave towards others, particularly with regard to what they post online. Be willing to have frank conversations about bullying, and posting hurtful, misleading or untrue comments. Make them aware of the dangers of behaviours like sexting and inappropriate use of webcams.
- Give your child control of their own budget for activities like downloading apps and music, but agree boundaries beforehand so that they manage their money responsibly. Don't give them access to your payment card or other financial details.
- Be clear in your own mind on issues such as copyrighted material and plagiarism so that you can explain to your child what is legal and what isn't.
- If your child has the technological know-how – and with sufficient influence from others – they could be vulnerable to experimenting with accessing confidential information from the websites of other people or companies. Hacking amongst this age group is very rare, but it does exist. Explain the dangers and consequences.

**Here are some questions you could discuss with your children, now that they are older:**

- Do you really know everybody on your 'friends' list?
- Do you know how to use and set privacy and security settings? Can you show me how?
- Do you ever get messages from strangers? If so, how do you handle them?
- Do you know anyone who has made plans to meet someone offline that they've only ever spoken to online?
- Are people in your group of friends ever mean to each other, or to other people, online or on phones? If so, what do they say? Has anyone ever been mean to you? Would you tell me about it if they were?
- Has anyone at your school, or anyone else you know, taken naked or sexy photos and sent them to other people, or received photos like that?