



Safer Internet Day

Today the Internet is very popular with young people, even those who are of primary age.

By understanding these sites and their potential risks you can help support your children in choosing an appropriate site and using it in a safe and constructive way, and also be able to help them if they need it...

SMART Rules

Here are 5 key SMART rules which remind young people to be SMART online. It can be useful to go through these tips with your children at home:

- **S**afe - Keep your child safe by being careful that they do not give out personal information when they are chatting or posting online.
- **M**eeting - Make sure they are aware that meeting with someone they have only been in touch with online is extremely dangerous. They should only do so with your permission and even then only when you are present.
- **A**ccepting - Accepting emails, Instant Messenger (IM) messages, or opening a file, picture or text from people they don't know or trust can lead to problems - for example, they may contain viruses or nasty messages!
- **R**eliable - Information found on the Internet may not be true, or someone may be lying about who they are.
- **T**ell - They should know that they must not be afraid to tell their parent, carer or trusted adult if something or someone makes them feel uncomfortable or worried, or if someone they know is being bullied online.

Open Dialogue

There are real advantages in maintaining an open dialogue with your child about their internet use. Not sure where to begin? These conversation starters can help:

Ask your children to tell you about the websites and apps they like to use and what they enjoy doing online.

Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn? What is ok and not ok to share?

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.

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.

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?

What Can I Do Right Now?

- Maintain an open dialogue with your child and encourage them to talk to you about their internet use.
- Create a family agreement to establish your children's boundaries and your expectations when on the Internet.
- Give your child strategies to deal with any online content that they are not comfortable with.
- Consider using filtering software to block unwanted content.
- Encourage your children to 'think before you post'. Online actions can impact not only yourself but the lives of others.
- Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings and reporting features available on popular sites and services.
- Familiarise yourself with the age ratings for games and apps which can help to indicate the level of suitability of the content.
- Set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online.
- Encourage your children to use nicknames instead of their full name online, to protect their personal information.
- Set up a PIN or password on devices to help protect personal information.

For more advice and resources:

www.childnet.com

www.safeinternet.org.uk