Help your kids to enjoy a safe and happy experience on the internet

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Are you in touch with what your kids do online?

Today's children are growing up in a connected world — but that doesn't mean they always know how to stay safe in it. As a parent or guardian, your guidance can make a huge difference.

Here are some practical ways to help your child explore the internet with confidence and care:

• Start the conversation early — and keep it going

Ask your child to walk you through the games they play, the sites they visit, or the videos they love. Talk openly about common online risks like oversharing, inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and interacting with strangers. Stay informed about the latest trends and lead by example with your own digital habits.

• Point them in a safer direction

Encourage the use of child-friendly apps and platforms, such as YouTube Kids. Check in regularly on what they're watching and sharing, especially on sites like YouTube and TikTok.

• Keep up with digital trends — especially the risky ones

Some games and social platforms have raised concerns for promoting violence, gambling, or unmoderated messaging. Get to know which ones your child is using and how they work.

• Don't underestimate the emotional impact

Social media and messaging apps can be powerful — sometimes overwhelmingly so. Help your child understand how online experiences can influence emotions, self-esteem, and mental health.

• Respect age restrictions — they exist for a reason

Most platforms have age limits to help protect children. Stick to them and talk to your child about why they matter.

• Set clear rules from the beginning

Agree on boundaries together: what's OK to do online, how long to spend on devices, and how to treat others with respect. Kids need structure and support to make smart choices online.

• Make the most of built-in tools

Use parental controls on devices, games, browsers, and social platforms. Enable privacy settings, safe search features, and family filters from your internet provider. These tools add an extra layer of protection.

• Be cautious with video calls

Always update apps to their latest version and adjust settings to ensure calls are private and secure. Allow communication only with trusted contacts.

• Talk about the pros and cons of online gaming

Gaming can help kids develop creativity and problem-solving skills—but it can also expose them to strangers, pressure to spend money, or even risky behaviours. Make time to chat about the games they play and how they use them.

• Teach critical thinking about online content

Help your child spot misinformation, fake news, and AI-generated content. Encourage them to question what they see and avoid sharing unverified content.

• Remind them to think before they share

Personal details, photos, videos—once they're online, they can be hard to take back. Talk to your child about what's appropriate to post and how to protect their and others' privacy.

• Stick to trusted sources for apps

Download apps only from official stores like Google Play or the App Store. Where possible, use your own email address when creating accounts for your child.

• Stay observant, not overbearing

Keep an eye on your child's online behaviour and watch for warning signs. Sadly, some young people have been targeted for serious online threats — from scams and grooming to involvement in criminal activity.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at **actionfraud.police.uk** or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.

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