OpenView Education

LEARNING THROUGH THEATRE

Keeping Children Safe Online:
A Helpful Guide

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1. GROWING UP IN A DIGITAL WORLD

There have been significant changes in the way young people use the internet. More young people now use the internet than ever before, and earlier than ever before. This has brought about some great benefits.

'48% of parents believe their children know more about the internet than they do and 73% of children agree.'

There are lots of positives:

- ⭐ Online games can enhance teamwork and creativity.
- ⭐ The Internet can add to children's understanding and knowledge.
- ⭐ Homes with computers can improve academic performance.
- ⭐ Responsible use of the internet can improve visual intelligence and hand-eye coordination.

But it also comes with brand new challenges:

- ⭐ Technology usage can negatively affect our sleep.
- ⭐ Social Media usage is linked to negatively affecting wellbeing and mental health.
- ⭐ 1 in 3 teenagers reported being victims of cyberbullying.

'70% of 5 – 11 year olds now use YouTube.'

With all these changes it can seem impossible to stay up to date. However, research now shows the gap in parents' and carers' knowledge is now starting to narrow as they gain a better understanding of the common social media platforms.

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Did you know…

⭐ More than half of the world's population now uses the internet.

⭐ It's only been 26 years since Tim Berners-Lee made the World Wide Web available to the public.

⭐ 2.8 Billion people are actively using social media globally.

> '48% of 11 year olds now have social media profiles.'

As children grow up in the digital world there are certain key milestones they will reach.

In some cases, we may want to talk about these milestones ahead of time with our children to create agreements and set boundaries.

Growing Up in a Digital World: The Milestones

⭐ **Age 3 – 4:** 1% own a mobile phone. 16% own a tablet.

⭐ **Age 5 – 7:** 68% use the internet to search with Google. Average time spent online: 8 hours, 42 minutes a week.

⭐ **Age 8 – 11:** 90% use the internet. 49% own a tablet. Average time spent online: 12 hours, 54 minutes per week. 56% play online games.

⭐ **Age 11 – 13:** Start of Secondary School. Parent and Carer concerns about cyberbullying increase. 48% of 11 year olds have a social media profile and are messaging, sharing and commenting. 74% own phones.

⭐ **Age 13- 15:** 98% use the internet. Average time spent online: 20 hours, 6 minutes per week.

⭐ **Age 5 – 15:** 16% of parents and carers have not spoken to their children about managing risks online. 42% of parents and carers have no awareness of online filters.

2. YOUR CONCERNS: WHAT ARE THE RISKS YOUNG PEOPLE FACE ONLINE?

Some commons concerns around keeping children safe online include:

⭐ 'I'm concerned that my child is being cyberbullied.'

⭐ 'I think my child is viewing inappropriate content online.'

⭐ 'I think my child is cyberbullying another student online.'

⭐ 'My child is spending too much time playing online games.'

⭐ 'I'm worried about the pressures of social media.'

⭐ 'I don't know who my child is talking to online.'

This guide covers some common concerns of parents and carers, and some key ideas for keeping children safe while they are using the internet.

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3. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT: SEEING, SENDING AND RECEIVING

In relation to inappropriate content, there are three main areas of concern:

SEEING

Children may come across content that is inappropriate for their age and stage of development. They may be looking for it out of curiosity or they may come across it accidentally while looking for something else.

ACTION STEPS:

⭐ Set up Parental Controls on home broadband. Safer Internet Centre have video guides on how to do this here.
⭐ Set the content lock on your mobile network provider. Find out how to set the content lock for EE here.
⭐ Consider using child friendly search engines such as Kiddle, Kidrex, or WackySafe.
⭐ Set Safe Search on Google and any other search engines.

TALK ABOUT:

⭐ How they can talk to you if they see anything that upsets them.
⭐ If they do see inappropriate sexual content you could explain how this represents an unrealistic image of sex and relationships.
⭐ They can ask you and talk to you about topics they are curious about.

SENDING

Children may be writing, creating or sending inappropriate content. This could be in the form of written messages or pictures they are posting. Sexting is a word used to describe the sending of nude, semi-nude or sexual images. This has become increasingly common and represents a very real challenge for young people. Incidents of Sexting have involved children as young as seven.

TALK ABOUT:

- ⭐ What information is okay to share online and what is not, and why.
- ⭐ The risks of uploading images online: What we upload or send can be copied and circulated.
- ⭐ What kinds of images are okay to share and what are not okay to share.
- ⭐ What to do if they are asked for pictures or videos of any kind.

RECEIVING

Children may have been sent inappropriate content online.

A big part of using the internet is communicating with others. As children grow up they may communicate with people they don't know in real life. Grooming is the word used to describe adults befriending children for sexual purposes.

ACTION STEPS:

- ⭐ Change privacy settings on social media profiles.
- ⭐ Learn how to block and report.

TALK ABOUT:

- ⭐ Agree the age that your children will use social media and explain why.
- ⭐ Set clear expectations about what you would like them to do if someone they don't know attempts to talk to them online.
- ⭐ Explain that people can pretend to be someone they are not by creating a fake profile.
- ⭐ Explain how we can spot if someone is not trustworthy when we are chatting online.
- ⭐ Not meeting up with people we have only met online.

There is a great video series created by 'thinkuknow' to start the conversation about these topics, you can find it [here](#).

If you need to report an incident of child grooming contact the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command [here](#).

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4. CYBERBULLYING

Many parents and carers are concerned about cyberbullying. With the possibility of accessing the internet anywhere at any time, cyberbullying is more pervasive than other forms of bullying.

Cyberbullying usually starts with face to face bullying.

Cyberbullying can be very common…

⭐ 25% of children will experience cyberbullying.

⭐ 50% of children say someone has been nasty to them online.

Many young people are unsure about what counts as Cyberbullying. It is very easy for people to become involved with Cyberbullying without realising what they are doing.

What is Cyberbullying?

Exclusion:

Leaving someone out of a game or an online chat.

Harassment:

The continuous sending of unkind or hurtful messages over a sustained period of time. There is an ongoing effort to cause pain and fear.

Outing:

Trying to embarrass someone by sharing private information or pictures of someone without their consent. Reading out someone's personal messages in front of other people is also a form of outing.

Fraping:

Logging into someone else's account, posing as them and then posting inappropriate content of any kind.

Dissing:

Posting information or images to damage someone's reputation.

Baiting:

Attempting to make someone feel angry to provoke an emotional response from them.

Catfishing:

Taking someone's pictures and information and then using these to create a fake profile as that person.

ACTION STEPS:

⭐ **Create a family Agreement:**

Talk through what cyberbullying is with your children, and agree that they will speak with you if they ever see or experience this kind of behaviour. Cyberbullying can be discrete and subtle: Help your children to recognise it if they see it.

TALK ABOUT:

⭐ What they should do if they see or experience Cyberbullying.
⭐ How we can behave respectfully while using the internet.
⭐ Why people behave differently when they are online.

5. SCREEN TIME: FOUR TOP TIPS

It's easy to spend too much time online and with our technology. Reducing the amount of screen time can be beneficial.

Here are some tips to help you manage your children's screen time.

1. Lead by Example:

Children tend to copy our behaviours. If you want them to stop using technology by a certain time, see if you can set an example by doing this yourself.

2. Talk Often:

Have regular conversations about everything you are doing online and what your children are doing online. If you feel that your children are spending too long online, this will allow you the opportunity of voicing your concerns.

3. Create a Family Agreement:

If you have agreed a set amount of screen time, write it down in your family agreement. Display your agreement where it can be clearly seen.

4. Screen Free Zone:

Try creating a 'Screen Free Zone' in your house. This could be a particular room in the house, or time of day, such as making dinner a screen free time.

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6. ONLINE GAMES

Online games are now more popular than ever. Games such as Fortnite are now played by over 40 million people every month. For specific parental game guides, check out the videos and information from 'Ask About Games' [here](#).

Below are some of the main internet safety concerns relating to online games.

Cyberbullying:

Communication between players means that cyberbullying can take place during online games. It is possible for disagreements that happen online to escalate into a bullying situation.

Sharing Information:

It is possible to share personal information while playing online.

Personal Information left on PCs and Consoles:

When consoles are 'traded in', it is important to wipe all saved information on the console. It is possible for passwords and accounts to be saved on the console and used by the next owner.

Webcams:

It is possible for webcams to be hacked. Make sure your webcam's default setting is off.

Strangers Online and Grooming:

Games offer an opportunity for offenders to contact a large number of children in a short space of time. They may gift game currency as a way of befriending children.

In Game Purchases:

Many games involve In Game Purchases, where players can buy upgrades with real money. Make sure these are disabled before your children begin playing.

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PEGI Ratings:

PEGI stands for Pan European Game Information, it lets us know if the content in the game is appropriate for our child. It can be helpful to have an understanding of the PEGI ratings. Detailed descriptions of what the PEGI ratings mean can be found here.

ACTION STEPS

⭐ Set parental controls on the console or PC.

⭐ Set relevant parental controls within the game settings.

⭐ Check the game is suitable for your child by looking at the PEGI rating. If you are unsure try playing the game yourself.

TALK ABOUT

⭐ What to do if someone they don't know tries to talk to them while they are playing.

⭐ Agree screen time limits: Create an agreement of how long the game can be played.

⭐ The suitability of games: Agree what age they need to be to play particular games. If you want to restrict them from playing a game they are interested in, give specific reasons.

Overexposure...

If children are overexposed to content that is inappropriate for their age, they may find this upsetting or frightening.

It may be possible that your child is expressing an interest in playing a game that you feel is not suitable for them. Or you may have older children in your home who are playing games that are not suitable for the younger children in your household.

In these situations, how can we prevent our children from seeing inappropriate content?

Here are some tips to deal with overexposure:

⭐ Explain when they will be able to play the game they are interested in and why.

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⭐ Give the younger child an enjoyable alternative activity or game. This can be used for when the older child is playing the game that you feel is not suitable for the younger child.

⭐ Praise them for behaving in a mature way when you tell them that the game is not appropriate for them at the moment.

7. PARENTAL CONTROL SOFTWARE

The first step for parental controls is to set them via our internet service provider.

The Safer Internet Centre has some fantastic video tutorials on how to set parental controls for the various internet service providers here.

You can also set parental controls on gaming consoles. You can find how-to guides for this on the 'ask about games' website here.

There is also software you can download onto your devices to help you monitor and set further parental controls on your devices. Below are some of the most popular parental control programmes.

Qustodio:

Qustodio allows you to filter content, set screen time limits and monitor websites visited. It also offers an easy to understand break down and overview of your child's digital habits.

Net Nanny:

NetNanny provides detailed overviews of each user's internet usage, allows you to set screen time limits, filter content, profanity masking and social media monitoring.

Kaspersky Safe Kids:

Kaspersky offers a free version with filtering and the ability to set screen time. The paid version has more functions and can be used on more devices.

Norton Family Premier

Norton allows web filtering, setting screen time, seeing search terms used and personal information protection.

We recommend spending some time researching these programmes to find the best option for your family.

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Thanks for Reading…

We hope you found this guide useful.

We'd love to hear what you thought:

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