

Internet Safety

Awareness raising for Parents and Carers

We all know that there are many dangers on the internet.... but how do **you** as parents deal with them?



For children and young people the internet, and the increasing number of digital devices they use to connect to it, is a part of their everyday lives. Whether they use it to express themselves or to stay in touch with friends, for entertainment or education, the internet can provide tremendous benefits and most use it safely. But while digital technology provides a wealth of opportunities, we are all aware that there are online risks and sometimes these risks can lead to harm.

At the same time, while young people's 'offline' and 'online' worlds are often merging, the behaviour and safeguards of the 'real' world are not always applied in a 'virtual' world where friends can be added at the click of button and information shared in an instant.

This guide aims to help parents consider some of the risks of the virtual world and how they can help their children be safe online.

Harmful content/ Illegal sites

Who has seen something online that you wish you hadn't? It could be something you have stumbled across or a link that was sent to you by a friend. How likely do you think it is that your child has had the same experience?

There is a lot of material online that is **not** appropriate for children to be viewing. Some content may even be illegal. In the real world it would be difficult to come across or gain access to this material, however online it can be found through open research or sent as a link or virus. To stop your child from being exposed to such content- put filters on the laptop, computer, games consoles and mobile phone that your child uses.

Privacy / Digital Footprints

When we teach children about personal information, we explain that this could be your school name, home address, a status update on where you are going to be on Saturday night, inappropriate photos, or just about anything that if it got into the wrong hands, could be used against you or used to locate you. By placing this type of information into an online space, you are leaving digital footprints behind. Try typing your name into a search engine such as Google or tonight and see what you find, then do the same with your child's name. Then do an image search with your name/ child's name. Remember this data could possibly be looked at by your child's next school or college, a future university, workplace, future partner. Tell your child to think before they share anything online and to only post comments and images that they wouldn't mind showing you or a member of the family.

What can parents and carers do to protect their child online?

Parents and carers need to be mindful that part of the fun of being online is communicating and often sites are designed for you to do so with people you don't know.

- Talk to your child about Stranger danger.
- Talk about their online friends.
- Let your child know that you are always there for support.
- Learn how to report any inappropriate contact made to your child online.

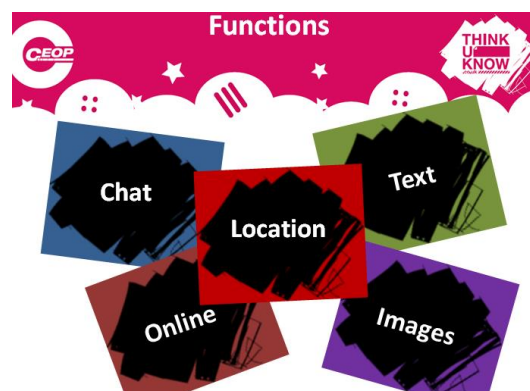
Many children come into school and discuss games that they have played at home that are not age appropriate. PEGI (The Pan-European Game Information age rating system) was established in 2003 to help parents make informed choices.



Tips for parents/carers

- Leave all gaming devices in a family space.
- Set time limits on how long they can game for. Allow time for non-technology based activities and allow 'screen free' time before bed.
- Open up communication - talk to your child about the sites they are using and why they like them.
- Explain that people lie online and they are not always who they say they are.
- Explain that people can be mean online and don't always have their best interests at heart.
- Ask them to never give out personal information.
- Set parental controls.

Mobile Technology



What do you think your child uses a mobile phone for?

- Talking/chatting
- Texting
- Going online
- Taking photos
- Sharing their location

The majority of phones are fitted with GPS, which is fantastic when you are lost and need Google Maps assistance as it can pin point you on a map and tell you exactly where you are and how to get to your destination. However, this function is now being used on sites such as Facebook. You can now tell people your exact location by 'checking in'. So if you "check in" this is shared on your social network profile and all of your 'friends' can see where you are. Let's remember not everyone is who they say they are online. People can tag you in places, which you may not want to share with everyone you know. You can protect yourself and your child by changing settings in the privacy settings area.

It has never been more important for your child to know who they are taking to and the information they are sharing.

Tips for parents/carers

- Is my child **old enough** to have a mobile phone? Set boundaries.
- Set **mobile rules** - no mobile phone in the bedroom at night, mobile free time before bed, no use after lights out – charge it up downstairs from the beginning.
- Before buying your child a mobile, find out what **functions** it has – Internet, private messaging, built in applications.
- Set **parental controls** where required.

Parental controls How can they help?

- Block sites that are not age appropriate
- Limit inappropriate and illegal material
- Set timings – automatic switch off at bedtime
- Monitor activity

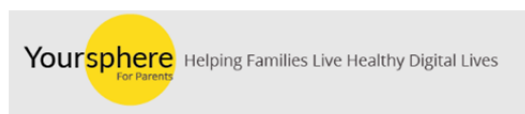
It is extremely important that all parents ensure that the above restrictions are in place. Please remember that once these settings are set, it does not mean that you are 100% “safe”. Some content may slip through the net and you will need to report it to your service provider. For more information please visit the parents’ website or call your service provider (BT, Talktalk Sky etc...) and see what packages they provide, some of which are free. To find out more google ‘parental controls’. Remember, the internet is available through many devices. Make sure your child is safe by controlling their phone, games consoles, laptops and PCs.



Many children use You Tube to watch Vloggers. Are you aware of the content that they are being exposed to?



Your child's age will determine how to proceed. YouTube is supposed to be for users over the age of 13, due to the fact that the parent company, Google, [collects and markets user data](#). The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ([COPPA](#)) exempts children from data collection. But, as we all know, plenty of kids have YouTube channels



How to set up a child friendly YouTube channel



We rate, educate, and advocate for kids, families, and schools

Is it OK for my child to start her own YouTube channel?

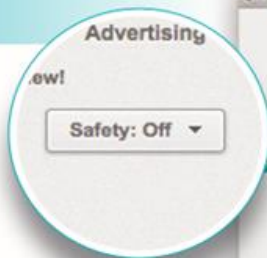


Setting Privacy Controls – You Tube

Step 1

Go to safety preferences

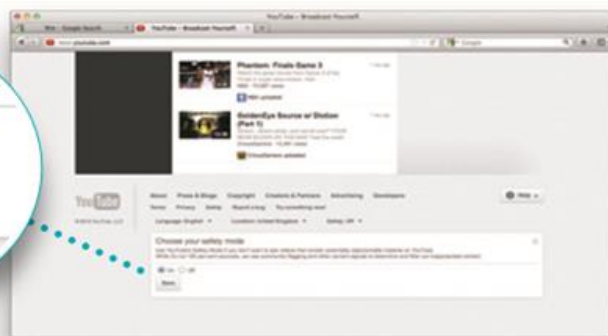
Simply go to the bottom of any page on YouTube™ and click the grey 'Safety' button to open the preference setting.



Step 2

Turn Safety Mode 'on' or 'off'

Choose to turn Safety Mode 'on' or 'off' and click on Save. If you turn it on and you have a YouTube™/Google account, you can sign in to your account and lock Safety Mode so that no-one else can change the settings whenever YouTube™ is accessed from that browser.



Please note: While no filter is 100% accurate, YouTube™ uses community flagging, hides objectionable comments and uses pornographic image detection to identify and hide inappropriate content. Safety Mode on YouTube™ does not remove content from the site but rather keeps it off the page for users who opt in.

You Tube
www.youtube.com

Additional Web Resources

- [CEOP for Parents and Carers](#)
- [BBC WebWise – online safety advice for parents](#)
- [Keeping your child safe online](#)
- www.o2.co.uk/parents