



For more information, please visit our school page: <https://www.balliolschool.co.uk/page/?title=E%2DSafety&pid=83>
Sign up here for a free weekly parent e-safety newsletter: <https://www.internetmatters.org/about-us/newsletters/>

Summertime

As we head into the summer holidays, we may find our children online more or having more screen time. Childnet have produced this blog, which includes how to help your child with managing their screen time: <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/screen-time-boundaries-parents/>

You may also be looking for activities to do with your child. Google and Parent Zone have produced some great resources that are free to download. They include a mix of online and offline activities, such as asking them to create a poster to show what they would do if they were worried about something they see online. You can access all the resources here:

<https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/download>

The Ineqe Safeguarding Group have published information on their website to help you manage your child's screentime during the summer break. Their website includes top tips for managing screen time, activities and guides to popular apps: <https://ineqe.com/2024/06/20/summertime-screen-time-2024/>

Setting up restrictions

Do you have parental controls set up?

Many children have access to technology and the internet through computers, tablets, games consoles, apps and many more things. Parental controls help you to stay in control of what your child can see and do online. Although they can differ from website to app to computer, this website has some great and very easy to follow guides to help you get started:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJSbhHkqYnrQLoUeebOlv-5UHiBk-bIf-> (Short how to videos from internet matters)

These websites have some very useful information to help you and your children stay safe when using amazon prime video and Netflix

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/amazon-primeamazon-video>

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/netflix-everything-you-need-know-about-streaming-service>

You can also use this website to check how old your child needs to be if you are unsure:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/how-old-does-your-child-have-be>

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Tackling Online Hate

One way in which we can tackle online hate is ensuring our children learn about what it is and how they can stop it. Internet Matters have created a quiz that you can complete with your child. As you progress through the questions, you will be given advice as well as questions to discuss and help you have a conversation with your child. The quiz is available here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/theonlinetogetherproject/tackling-online-hate-quiz/>

Think before you share

It is important to talk to your children about personal information so that they can avoid sharing personal information and photos online. This includes details like their full name, address, phone number, school, and passwords. They should also be cautious about who they interact with online and avoid meeting up with people they've only met online. Remind them that not everyone online is who they say they are and that anything shared online can be easily shared or downloaded by others.

Personal Information to Keep Private:

- **Full Name:** Avoid using their full name in usernames or public profiles.
- **Address:** Never share their home address or location online.
- **Phone Number:** Do not post their phone number or make it visible to strangers.
- **School Name:** Keep their school name private to prevent unwanted attention.
- **Passwords:** Never share passwords with anyone, even friends.
- **Financial Details:** Never share bank details, credit card information, or any financial information online.
- **Location Information:** Be cautious about sharing location data through photos or check-ins.
- **Photos and Videos:**

Here are some top tips to talk to your children about =

- 1) **Think before you post:** Consider the potential consequences of sharing photos or videos, as they can be easily shared and downloaded by others.
- 2) **Privacy settings:** Always use high privacy settings on social media and other platforms to control who can see their posts.
- 3) **Be mindful of what's in the photo:** Remember that even seemingly harmless photos can reveal personal information, like school uniforms or locations.
- 4) **Respect others' privacy:** Never share photos or videos of others without their consent.
- 5) **Talk to a trusted adult:** Remind children that they can always talk to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult if they have any concerns or questions about online safety.

WhatsApp Group warning

Whilst WhatsApp has an age rating of 13+, a BBC investigation has found that children as young as nine have been added to WhatsApp groups and seen inappropriate content. If your child is using WhatsApp, check their group settings as by default, group privacy settings are set to 'everyone,' which means anybody can add your child to a group without their approval. You can change this setting to 'My Contacts' so only contacts can add them to groups without their approval and if somebody who is not a contact wants to add them to a group then they will need to send them an invite.

You should talk to your child about the risks of joining groups and show them how to use the reporting/blocking tools. You can find out more about the BBC investigation here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy0l4z8n1p9o>

Checking History

Almost every child today has used a computer, a tablet, or a smartphone with Internet access. This starts at an early age, and as a parent or carer, you should be careful not only to educate your child but also to control it. Dangers lurk even on the Internet, even if they are not so obvious, so it would be advisable for internet tracking of your child and be able to intervene immediately in case of suspicious activity. Today's children are the online generation and now spend a lot of their free time on the network.

You should check the history of your child's browser at regular intervals. This will help you quickly identify suspicious websites. Without internet tracking on your child, no real protection can be achieved as you will never know what your kids are browsing online.

Here are some useful tips and methods:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K7B_MZBL24 – Browser history

<https://kidslox.com/how-to/view-browser-history/> - Mobile phones

Social Media Influencers

What is an Influencer?

An influencer is somebody prominent on a social media platform such as YouTube and Instagram, who have a high number of followers. Influencers share their opinions/ideas and may be paid to advertise/promote products through their account. Whilst there are some great influencers, there are some that choose to share their own opinions, which could be misogynistic or racist for example. These opinions can be expressed or interpreted as fact. It is important to talk to your child about the spread of misinformation online and how we should fact check and critically analyse what we see and hear online.

What we see on social media platforms is influenced by algorithms, which predict what type of content we are most likely to interact with. Whilst there are benefits of algorithms, it can mean that once we start looking at certain content, our social media feed can become more aligned with that opinion, so we don't see a balanced picture. You can find out more here:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/algorithms/>

Further information:

The NSPCC have created an article detailing what you need to know about online influencers. You can read it here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/2023-05-16-the-influence-of-influencers/>

Is being online affecting our child's mental health?

There are many positives to being online, but we do need to be aware of the negative aspects including those that may impact our child's mental health and wellbeing, for example:

- Social media (spending too much time on social media, comparing ourselves to others, filtered images and desire to achieve likes).
- Cyberbullying
- Seeing inappropriate content
- Constantly connected/information overload
- Excessive screentime
- Negative impact on our sleep

Further information

• Childnet discusses digital wellbeing in more detail and includes top tips and conversation starters: <https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/digital-wellbeing/>

- The NSPCC provides further information about mental health including signs to look out for and how to get further support: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/>

Mobile Phones – Advice for parents and carers

Here is an idea of how to start a conversation with your child about using a phone safely:

1. Why do you want to get a phone?

Whilst deciding if it is time for your child to have their first phone can be a great opportunity to find out what your child expects to use their phone for. This could be for connecting with friends, playing games, for keeping in touch whilst out of the house or other reasons.

2. What do you like about using your phone?

You can ask your child about their favourite apps or games, what they like using their phone for, or you can ask them to show you how to play or use their favourite game or website.

3. What would you do if something worrying or upsetting happened on your phone?

You can ask them about the places they can go to find the safety advice, find out what they know about privacy settings, and ask them how to report or block on the services they use.

4. How can we do more online together?

Ask your child about activities or games that you could enjoy as a family, this can be a great time to establish a family agreement your families time online.

Top tips

- **Talk with your child about responsible use of their phone**

Discuss what is okay and not okay to use their phone for. Talk about time limits and expectations of where the device can and cannot be used, this could include things like the phone being charged outside their bedroom overnight.

- **Discuss what to do if something upsetting or worrying happens**

Give them the strategies they need in case something concerning happens whilst they are using their device. This could be to lock the screen and tell an adult, to make a report to the platform they are using, or to block the user.

- **Explore parental controls**

Take a look at the controls available both on the phone itself and on your home Wi-Fi. Talk these through with your child too. Parental controls are a helpful tool, but an open conversation with your child is the most important thing.

FAQs about phones

- **What can a phone be used for?**

Phones give young people a way to keep in touch with their friends and families, look up information and enjoy games and social media. Phones can send and receive calls and messages, browse the internet and take photos and videos. There are also a huge amount of apps that can be downloaded that allow the user to do many different things such as watch videos, connect with friends, make video calls, play games, get news updates, and much more.

- **How can I introduce a phone in a safe way?**

Whether your child already has a phone or they are about to get their first one, explore the parental controls on offer and have a conversation with your child to set up some boundaries around their phone use, for example, who they can give their number to, or where they keep it overnight. Reassure them you want to help them to enjoy using it safely, and that they can talk to you if anything upsets or worries them while using it. If your child is very young, spend time with them downloading some appropriate apps and games. If your child is older, have a conversation with them about what they like or want to use their phone for, and what apps or games they use. Give them a strategy to use if something goes wrong, for example, turning off the screen and coming to talk to you.

- **What about inheriting or buying a second hand phone?**

Restore any second-hand phone to its factory settings before your child uses it. This means deleting all data on the phone and returning to its basic settings, as if it was new. This will avoid you or your child potentially accessing someone else's personal information, private messages, photos, accounts, etc. It will also allow you to set up parental controls that are most suitable for your child.

- **What are the risks to having a phone?**

Like any piece of technology, phones have both benefits and risks. Many of the risks depend on how a phone is being used. There are some key concerns people have about children using phones in particular:

- Cyberbullying and harassment from friends and strangers
- Unwanted or inappropriate contact from friends and strangers
- Over-sharing personal information, such as full name, location or images
- Accessing inappropriate content
- Spending too much money
- Excessive screen time
- Behaving inappropriately or unkindly online

- **What can I do to manage the risks?**

Parental controls can help limit potential risks, such as installing passwords, blocking certain websites or apps, and setting time limits and spending limits. For further information on how to set up controls on a phone, visit <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/smartphones-and-other-devices/>. Talk with your child about their understanding of the risks when using a phone. Ask them what they would do if something happened, for example, if they experienced cyberbullying. Decide together on what they should do if that happened, for example, take a screenshot and tell an adult. A family agreement can help you have these conversations. Explore safety tools such as blocking and privacy settings together and help your child set up these up where necessary. Make sure your child knows to speak to a trusted adult immediately if anyone they only know online (a stranger) asks to meet up, for their personal information, or for photos or videos of them.

- **What can I do if something goes wrong?**

Reassure your child you are there to listen and help. Ask about the problem and try to find out how it happened. Try to remain calm and non-judgemental, to help your child feel comfortable in telling you how the issue happened. Work with your child to report or block any unacceptable behaviour or other users. Contact the school for further support, particularly if it involves cyberbullying between classmates or inappropriate contact from an adult. If you suspect that your child is or has been the subject of inappropriate sexual contact by another person, report this to Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.police.uk.

If your child has accessed inappropriate content, you can report this to the site or service it appeared on. Find out how to do this on the childnet website. Explore the settings to see if you can limit the risk of it happening again.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers/phones>

What is artificial intelligence (AI)?

AI is when a computer/machine can learn and perform tasks like a human. Its popularity is increasing due to the likes of ChatGPT and more recently, My AI from Snapchat. Internet Matters have created a guide about using AI with your child and lists some popular AI tools that you should be aware of:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/parent-guide-to-artificial-intelligence-ai-tools/>

In addition, Childnet have produced this blog about Snapchat's My AI:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/snapchats-new-ai-chatb>

Snapshot update: My AI

You should be over 13+ to use Snapchat. Snapchat have announced that My AI will now be available to all users, it was previously only available to paid subscribers of Snapchat+. My AI will show as one of your chat contacts and users will be able to ask it questions and have a conversation with it. Snapchat are planning to incorporate an overview in their parental tools (Family Centre) to allow you to see if your child is chatting with My AI, but there is no confirmed date as to when this additional tool will be available. There were concerns with My AI when initially released, for example it was providing responses that weren't always age appropriate. Snapchat have stated that 99.5% of responses now conform to their community guidelines, but we would recommend talking to your child about their use of My AI. At present the only way to delete My AI is to become a Snapchat+ subscriber.

You can find out more here:

<https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/13266788358932-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-do-I-use-it->

Being unkind online

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect and kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face. How they act online should be how they behave on the school playground when they are following school rules. Here are some examples of what being unkind looks like online:

- Sending nasty or hurtful messages
- Leaving unkind comments
- Sharing photographs of somebody else without their permission
- Excluding somebody on purpose
- Impersonating somebody with a fake account
- Telling/sharing lies

The above might happen whilst your child is gaming online or whilst using social media or messaging apps e.g. WhatsApp.

Top Internet Manners

Internet Matters have produced a list of 'manners' that we all should follow to create a safer and kinder online world: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/top-internet-manners/>

What should I do if my child is being bullied online?

Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages or see something that worries them, they should not reply or engage in conversation with the perpetrator. Instead, they should tell a trusted adult. You can use the tools within an app to report any offensive or hurtful content as well as block people so they cannot contact you again in the future.

Further information <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids/I-want-help-with/how-do-i-know-if-im-being-mean-online>

Children's Online Safety Test

Virgin Media have created four different Internet Safety Tests around four key topics to help you learn more about the internet and different terms that you might come across such as catfishing.

You can access them here:

<https://www.virginmedia.com/blog/online-safety/childrens-internet-safety-test/>

