

How to keep my child safe online?

What do the experts tell us?

Parents and carers are used to protecting their children across all aspects of every day life, and this should also include keeping their children safe when they go online. Whilst many may feel that their children are confident users of internet technologies, this doesn't always mean that they use it safely or that they always make appropriate online choices.

It is essential that parents and carers talk to their children about what they are:

- ◆ What they are doing and viewing online
- ◆ Who they are contacting online
- ◆ And how they are behaving online

The South West Grid for learning suggest the following 6 tips

- * Keep the dialogue open with your child and revisit as and when necessary
- * Look for signs and opportunities to intervene
- * Trust your gut and act
- * Focus on the behaviour not the technology
- * Do some research to ensure what they are using is age appropriate
- * Supervise them to ensure you know what they are doing

Both Childnet International and NSPCC have ideas to engage young people on how technology should be used including agreement.

Askboutgames.com helps with safe setting on games consoles and UK Safer Internet Centre has guides on web browsers, social networks and TV on demand

Playlist and information available on Hwb online safety zone

- ◆ Mental health and the internet
- ◆ A parent and carer's guide to new apps. Connected toys and platforms
- ◆ The inst effect: Body image and self-worth in digital age
- ◆ A parent and carers' guide to the benefits and risks of online gaming
- ◆ Screen time overload?
- ◆ Online friendships
- ◆ A parent and carer's guide to using safety features built into Smart TVs and on demand streaming services
- ◆ Onlinebullying
- ◆ How to keep myself safe online
- ◆ Screen time: Balance, expression and limits
- ◆ A parent and carer's guide to talking to your child about staying safe online
- ◆ A parent and carer's guide to Google SafeSearch and YouTube Safety Mode
- ◆ Fact or Fiction: Don't be fooled online
- ◆ A parent and carer's guide to age rating of apps and games
- ◆ Sharing images

It is a strange feeling to think your child may know more than you about technology but there are guides on the hwb online safety zone to help.



Year 7 Guide to Online Safety

All our resources are taken from Hwb. This is the Welsh Governments portal for education and has an online safety zone. This can be accessed by parents WITHOUT the need to logon with a username.

<https://hwb.gov.wales/onlinesafety/parents-and-carers>



Mental health and the internet

What do the experts tell us?

There is growing evidence about the impact of the internet on mood and mental health. The internet by itself is not the main cause of poor mental health. But the way children and young people use the internet can impact them.

The experts tell us that most of the time, the things children and young people do online are positive. The benefits include social support, improved social skills and access to advice.

But they also say that some things can have a negative impact. Problematic or excessive use can impact their day-to-day lives. This may include social isolation, disrupted sleep and exposure to harm.

Research shows that playing games may boost children's and young people's learning, health and social skills. Those who play games have reported less depression compared to those who say they never play. Being online gives children and young people opportunities to develop and maintain positive relationships. This can be very helpful for their emotional development. As parents and carers we can sometimes be guilty of only talking about the internet when things go wrong. Why don't you ask your children about some of the things they do online that help them to relax and feel happy?

Excessive time online can make children and young



people more anxious or depressed. Most games, apps and platforms are designed to make you keep using them so how do we balance this with sleep? Sleep is crucial for development and lack of sleep is associated with lower mood and depression. Sleep is particularly important for teenagers as this is a key time for development. The blue light of screens before bed or waking up to check phones in the night can affect sleep quality. It is important to help your children to 'switch off' and balance the time they spend online. The best way to do this is to discuss as a family how you are going to balance time online, so you all agree together. Self-confidence, body image and the importance of friendships are also affected by digital technology. [For more information go to hwb](#)



What do the experts tell us?

Internetmatter.org report that 1 in 5 teenagers claim to have experienced online bullying.

Bullying is often defined as a deliberate and repeated action or behaviour designed to cause harm or upset to the victim. You should talk about the use or mis-use of technology with your child anyway. It is always an important conversation to have regardless of the situation.



But what if you discover your child is bullying online?

NSPCC 
HELPLINE
0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC

have an area called 'What to do if your child has been bullying others'. Childline suggest that your child first needs to admit that what they are doing is hurting another person. When they know that, they can figure out how to stop. There is also advice on their website.

If you find your child is being bullied, you might well share the upset, hurt and anger that your child is feeling but it is important to try not to over-react in this situation. The advice given is to acknowledge the courage your child has shown in coming forward. Listen to what they have to say without judging them. Save any evidence maybe through taking screenshots of the bullying. Talk about what your options are and identify actions. Firstly report the abuse to the technology platform as bullying goes against most terms and conditions of use. Then engage with the school to raise the awareness of the issue.

Not all children will speak up if they are being bullied but there are signs and symptoms to watch out for if you think your child is a victim of bullying online. Many of these behaviours relate to bullying in general:-

- **Becoming more withdrawn**
- **Not doing so well in school**
- **Wanting to miss school**
- **Avoiding using technology**
- **Loss of confidence.**

Internetmatters.org have a section on protecting your child and the NSPCC have an area on the website dedicated to parents/carers.