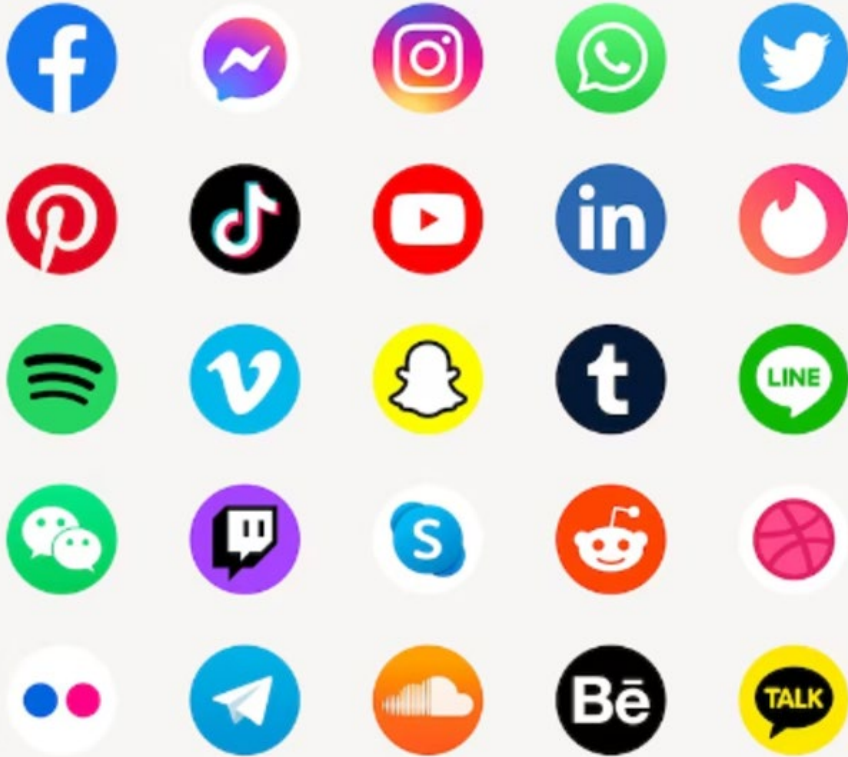


# Online Safety | Enfield Council



## SOCIAL MEDIA ICONS



### **ACTIVITY:**

How many icons can you identify?

# Keep Your Child Safe Online



## T E C H

### TALK

Talk to your child about their internet use and safety

Have meaningful conversations about how they use the internet

Praise your child for safe online behaviours

Welcome your child if they want to ask you a question or tell you about a problem, even if they've done something unwise themselves

### EDUCATE

Learn as much as you can about games, platforms, parental controls and the benefits and risks of online activity

Teach your child about specific issues and concerns

Teach your child about safe and unsafe relationships and how to repair friendships following disagreements online

### CO-VIEW

Co-view your child's online activity at least once a week

Interact with your child online

Model appropriate online behaviour

Co-operate with each other to promote the well-being of all



### HOUSE RULES

Set clear routines, rules and boundaries ("house rules")

Keep to age ratings and guidance for apps, games and devices

Restrict online activity to daytime and communal areas

Use filters and parental controls

Spend regular screen-free time with your child



AGE 11+

for a basic phone or highly restricted smart phone without internet access or social media

AGE 14+

for a smart phone with parental controls

\*Agree a contract with your child to encourage responsible phone use

Our guidance is research-based, comprehensive and designed to genuinely help parents and safeguard our children. It is based on the **TECH** approach.



### TALK

Encourage two-way communication with your child



### EDUCATE

Stay informed about the latest online risks



### CO-VIEW

Spend time online together



### HOUSE RULES

Set clear rules for internet use



# TALK

## Encourage two-way communication with your child

# TALK

### Talk to your child about their internet use and safety

Talking to your child, and making sure your child feels able to talk to you, is the best way to protect your child.

Children want to be able to talk through online issues with a trusted adult and know that you will be well served.

A recent study with a cyber-bullying focus (Muhali, 2023) found that children preferred guidance from their parents and wanted these discussions to occur at least once a week. Do you know your child's best? Your child might need daily or weekly talks about their internet use.

### Have meaningful conversations about how they use the internet

Be Curious! Ask your child how they use the internet and what they enjoy doing.



Your child is likely to use the internet differently from you. They might enjoy playing different games, listening to music, watching videos, creating content or chatting to friends. UK Guidance from Barnardo's and internet leaders recommends that parents/carers start to talk to their children about their internet use on a regular basis from an early age.

You can encourage your child to share what they do online by:

- Asking for their opinion on a game, music, video, etc. based on a new story you've heard or something you've read/heard about. "I've heard about this TikTok video about [specific topic], what do you think of it... Do you watch similar videos?"

#### TOP TIP

Try not to put your child on the spot by saying "Before internet, I wanted to chat to you about...". Instead find a natural time when an opportunity presents itself, such as when hearing a similar event in the news, reading an article or from conversations with other people. Remember to ask open-ended questions and ask further questions to understand their views.

- Asking for their advice on how to do something online, such as "These videos keep popping up, how do I block or filter these videos?". Use similar content as a conversation starter with your child by asking how they manage difficult things online.

#### TOP TIP

In order to feel safe and comfortable, children need to know that they can confide in parents about both positive and negative online experiences, without fearing punishment or parents expressing highly upset/angry with them. Try not to rush in with your views and provide helpful advice too soon. Your aim to begin with is to help your child feel listened to and heard, validating their feelings. Children need coaching on how to manage difficult online experiences and away conversation with your child is a teachable moment.

- Asking your child how online activities make them feel. "When you watch things online, how does it make you feel?" Ask open-ended questions, remain non-judgmental. Try to avoid blaming children and let them know it's safe to about their feelings. "I know sometimes internet might make you feel bad, embarrassed or guilty. You can tell me about anything – happy or funny. Children want their parents to be able to them when something difficult happens."

#### TOP TIP

Some children might not be able to identify how the internet makes them feel. You can use "I wonder..." to help them identify their emotion. For example, "I wonder if playing this makes you feel angry and upset, that your body feels really tense – and you seem to be worried about games". You can also ask children about their feelings, such as "I wonder if you feel angry and upset when you see something bad on the internet. Can you tell me about something you saw that made you feel angry and upset?"

- Talking about online safety issues in national and local news. Children should be able to identify and understand online issues that they encounter in or online. Without proper guidance, misinterpreted information and to be on their own, which can lead to confusion for meaning. This can lead to fear about specific online safety issues. It is therefore important to regularly talk about online safety in appropriate ways and follow up with them when they are okay. Sharing further examples you can talk about online grooming in the same way as stranger danger. This is also a helpful way to understand your child's perspective.

- Reading a book/article together about specific online safety issues. This provides an opportunity for children to talk about online safety issues in a safe space. Children may want to ask questions, share their views, or maybe share their experiences.

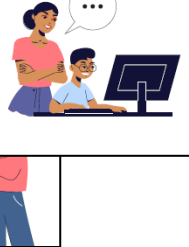
#### TOP TIP

Some children may feel uncomfortable talking about these subjects. It's important to remain open and curious. Give your child the time to talk about the subject and follow their pace. Make sure children know that they can come back to the topic later if they feel more comfortable.

- Having regular "digital check-ins". Schedule regular time to check in with your child. Allow them to talk about their online activity and share their joys and concerns with you.

#### TOP TIP

Some children may need extra reassurance that you won't be cross or upset with them e.g. "I'm not going to be cross with you, even if you think you've done something wrong. I'm worried about you and I want to help you". When children disclose something difficult to you, your first reaction will affect how they tell you or other trusted adults about their difficulties in the future. Try to stay calm and thank the child for sharing their difficulty. You do not need to have a plan straightaway or be an expert in online safety; you can seek further advice if needed. Simply say "Thank you for telling me this, I need to call/bubble/WhatsApp about this issue, so I know how I can help you."



### Praise your child for safe behaviours

Research demonstrates that parents can be powerful impact on how children approach situations and on their mindset. You can talk about online behaviours and outside online skills by:

- Praising your child for their specific effort and qualities

**Don't just say:** "Well done, you are so good at this!"

**Do say:** I like how you thought of a strong memorable password and you don't tell anyone.

**Don't just say:** "You did the right thing!"

**Do say:** I must have been quite scary, sorry message. You did the right thing sharing it. I'm going to thank this person and report (Child and Exploitation and Online Protection Centre).

**Don't just say:** "You are a good friend!"

**Do say:** I like how you said this person saying mean things to your friend. You're a city hero, I'm sure your friend is grateful!

**Don't just say:** "Great job! You are so good at this!"

**Do say:** Great job! I'm impressed how you reported the issue! Can you show me how you did it?

**Don't just say:** "Thank you for wanting to stop me!"

**Do say:** You are the real hero by not just reporting it, you handled it calmly and positively way to respond.

**Don't just say:** "I'm very proud of you!"

**Do say:** I'm proud of how you do, even well negative comment. You handled it calmly and positively way to respond.

By stating the specific skills, efforts and that your child is using to help safe online, you are normalising these skills and helping your child to understand healthy online behaviours, which will encourage them to repeat these skills/qualities for similar future situations.

- Asking questions about their process. Ask questions which encourage your child to talk about how and why they made specific decisions. This will help them to develop their own skills as well as informing you about their development. It is also likely to teach you some skills too!

**How did you do that? Will you show me?**

**How did you decide the settings for this game?**

**Would you do it any differently next time?**

**What outcomes are you aiming for?**

**How do you decide which comments to report?**

**Encouraging sharing mistakes! Mistakes are part of learning.** As children are navigating the internet, they will naturally make mistakes with how they interact with others, access sites, misinterpret information or someone's intention, share factually incorrect information or engage in unhelpful online behaviours. Children would like their parents to stay calm and help them when something difficult happens online. Therefore, it is important that parents help children to view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures. To avoid children feeling defensive, ashamed or resistant to talking about their mistakes, parents need to approach this calmly and curiously. Parents can foster a safe environment to make mistakes by providing reassurance and praise to children.

### Keep Your Child Safe Online | A Guide for Parents, Carers and Guardians

**Encourage open comments** to me about this. It's okay to be wrong! It's more important to try and take a bit of courage to share I'm proud of you for coming to figure this out together".

**Normalise making mistakes** online at some point that you're learning from this, calmly. There's a big sea level.

**Share your own mistakes:** I made a similar mistake online moments like this, and it's not that matters. I'm here to help.

**Discuss the mistake and its consequences:** "We can help Let's talk about what happened again in the future."

**Focus on problem solving:** How to change your password mistake. "You know how no email. Practising this will help mistakes in the future. This is a help children to move on and mistakes for too long, avoid feeling upset. Remind them that learning and emphasising what they experienced and how to together."

**Think about what you can learn from a mistake:** crucial for brain and learning. Use it to confirm knowledge and fostering resilience – Carol Dweck.

**You can report to your child's school, LEADER, or direct via CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre).**

**Keep Your Child Safe Online | A Guide for Parents, Carers and Guardians**

### Welcome your child if they want to ask you a question or tell you about a problem, even if they've done something unwise themselves

Children can feel particularly reluctant to share a concern with an adult if they have acted unwise themselves, and can find themselves at greater risk as a result. Children need to feel able to approach a trusted adult for support in all circumstances.

You can support your child to feel able to approach you by:

- telling them that they are able to
- listening to them and paying attention when they speak with you
- reassuring displaying any anger or imposing punishment
- remaining calm
- talking through issues and discussing possible actions as a team

Some children may feel more comfortable using a "safe object" or code word to demonstrate that they need to talk and that you need to remain calm and listen. A "safe object" could be an agreed toy, a journal, a photo, a note or a particular code word or emoji.

**"A child needs our love and attention most when they deserve it the least" – Gaber Mate**

If you are concerned about your child's response to reading an article or recognise some signs of online abuse, please see Resources and Resources on page 92 or contact a senior school professional for support.

**You can report to your child's school, LEADER, or direct via CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre).**

**Keep Your Child Safe Online | A Guide for Parents, Carers and Guardians**

#### Signs to look out for include:

- There's been a sudden change in how children use the internet e.g. they spend more or less time online than usual.
- Your child may seem distant, upset or angry using the internet or texting. Or there has been a change in their mood or emotional wellbeing.
- Your child may seem secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online.
- Your child may have a lot of new phone numbers, messages or emails.
- Your child engages less with family and usual friends.

#### What should you do if you think your child might be bullying others online?

- Your child might be the child who is targeting another in cyberbullying or other unwise online behaviour.
- We recommend that you talk openly with your child and remain curious about what they have done and why.
- Most children who have cyberbullied have themselves been bullied previously. Educate your child and help them to reflect on the impact their actions have on other children. Co-view the internet with your child and make house rules on being kind on the internet. Talk to your child's teacher or other senior professional if you have any further concerns.

Further resources can be found here:



- The importance of talk
- How to welcome your child, even if they've done something unwise themselves
- How to open up a conversation



## TALK

Encourage two-way communication with your child

### Talk to your child about their internet use and safety

**Talking to your child, and making sure your child feels able to talk to you, is the number one way to protect your child.**

Children want to be able to talk through online issues with a trusted adult and know that they will be welcomed and well received.

A recent study with a cyber-bullying focus (Mulhall, 2023) found that children preferred regular online safety guidance from their parents and wanted these discussions to occur at least once a week. As a parent/carer, you know your child best! Your child might need daily or weekly talks about their internet use and staying safe online.

### Have meaningful conversations about how they use the internet

**Be Curious!** Ask your child how they use the internet and what they enjoy doing.

How did you do that?  
Will you show me?

How did you decide the settings for this game?

Would you do it any differently next time?

What outcome are you aiming for?

Did you block them?  
Why/why not?

How do you decide which comments to report?



## TALK

Encourage two-way communication with your child

**Welcome your child if they want to ask you a question or tell you about a problem, even if they've done something unwise themselves**



*Think about what you've learned from a mistake. Mistakes are crucial for brain development and learning, as they challenge us to confront gaps in our knowledge and abilities, fostering resilience and growth.*  
– Carol Dweck

## Praise your child for safe online behaviours

Research demonstrates that parents can have a powerful impact on how children approach difficult situations and on their mindset. You can encourage safe online behaviours and cultivate critical thinking skills by:

### a) Praising your child for their specific skills, effort and qualities

**Don't just say:** "Well done! You are so smart thinking of these!"

**Do say:** I like how you thought of a strong and memorable password and you didn't share this with anyone.

**Don't just say:** "You did the right thing!"

**Do say:** It must have been quite scary reading this message. You did the right thing sharing this with me. I'm going to block this person and report this to CEOP (Child and Exploitation and Online Protection)

**Don't just say:** "You are a good friend!"

**Do say:** I like how you asked this person to stop saying mean things to your friend. You've been a good ally here. I'm sure your friend is grateful for this.

**Don't just say:** "Great job! You are so talented!"

**Do say:** Great job! I'm impressed! How did you report this video? Can you show me how?

**Don't just say:** "Thank you for waiting!"

**Do say:** Thank you for waiting to show me this image. You did the right thing by not responding straight away.

**Don't just say:** "I'm very proud of you!"

**Do say:** I'm proud of how you dealt with that negative comment. You handled it calmly and found a positive way to respond.

By stating the specific skills, efforts and qualities that your child is using to keep safe online, you are normalising these skills and helping your child to understand healthy online behaviours, which will encourage them to repeat these skills/qualities for similar future situations.



## TALK

Encourage two-way communication with your child

### ACTIVITY:

How would you react if your child told you about a problem they were having online? What if it was their 'fault' to begin with?

How does your child know that it is safe to share worrying things with you?



*"A child needs our love and attention most when they deserve it the least"*  
- Gabor Mate



**EDUCATE**

Stay informed about the latest online risks



## ACTIVITY: Quick Quiz

Question	Answer
The majority of parents do not believe their child has viewed pornography online. What percentage of children report that they have viewed pornography by the age of 14?	
What percentage of children have had online sexual interaction with an adult?	
How many unique child sexual images are recorded in the Child Sexual Abuse Database (figure from 2019)?	
What percentage of children have accessed hateful content online?	
Online suicide and self harm sites have been indicated in what percentage of young suicides?	
Alexander McCartney from Co Armagh was sentenced to 20 years in jail for what?	
What is the number one way we can protect our young people from online harm?	





## EDUCATE

Stay informed about the latest online risks



Question	Answer
The majority of parents do not believe their child has viewed pornography online. What percentage of children report that they have viewed pornography by the age of 14?	<b>94% (10% by the age of 10)</b>
What percentage of children have had online sexual interaction with an adult?	<b>5-25%</b>
How many unique child sexual images are recorded in the Child Sexual Abuse Database (figure from 2019)?	<b>8.3 million</b>
What percentage of children have accessed hateful content online?	<b>Up to 69%</b>
Online suicide and self harm sites have been indicated in what percentage of young suicides?	<b>25%</b>
Alexander McCartney from Co Armagh was sentenced to 20 years in jail for what?	<b><u>Catfishing: Alexander McCartney jailed for minimum of 20 years - BBC News</u></b>
What is the number one way we can protect our young people from online harm?	<b>TALK</b>





## EDUCATE

Stay informed about the latest online risks

Learn as much as you can about games, platforms, parental controls and the benefits and risks of online activity

### Step 1

**Check them out! Understand the games, apps and platforms your child is most likely to use**

The number one way you can understand how games and apps are structured is to download them and use them yourself before allowing your child access.

### Step 2

**Understand the terminology**

### Step 3

**Understand how to set up parental controls and filters in your home and on your child's devices**

### Step 4

**Understand the key benefits**

### Step 5

**Understand the key risks and read the statistics**



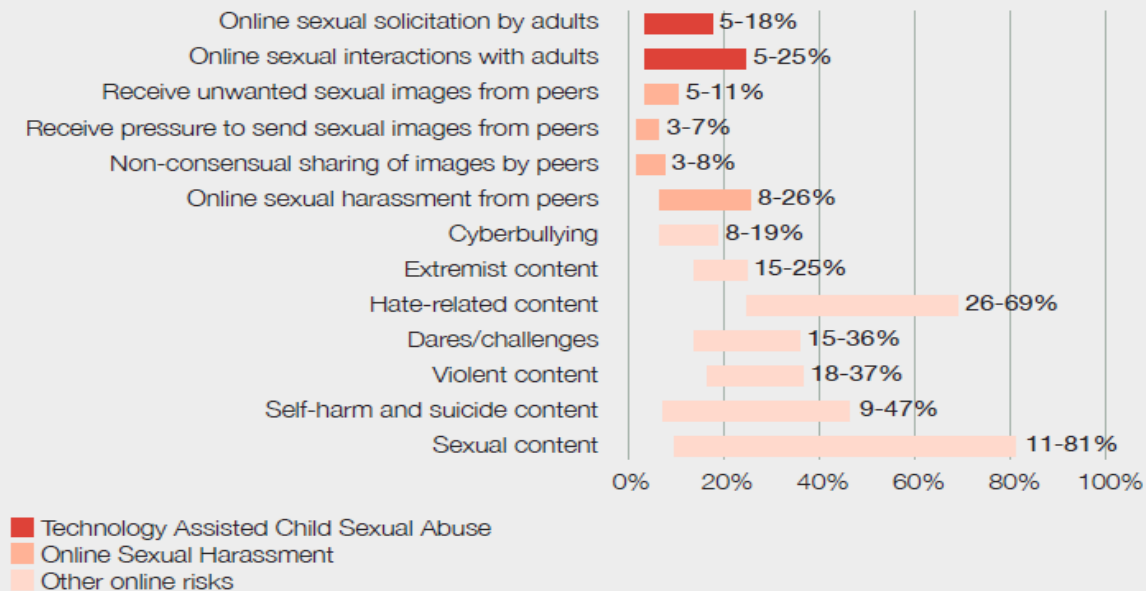
## EDUCATE

Stay informed about the latest online risks

### Step 5

Understand the key risks and read the statistics

#### Prevalence of children's exposure to sexual online risks and a range of other online risks



Reference: [Online Risks to Children: Evidence Review Main Report \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/online-risks-to-children-evidence-review-main-report/)



# EDUCATE

Stay informed about the latest online risks

## KEY RISK 1: Online sexual abuse

### Online sexual interaction with an adult

Between 5% and 18% of children have experienced online sexual solicitation, where they have been offered money or gifts in return for a sexual act<sup>1</sup>.

5-25% of children have had online sexual interactions with adults.

Online abuse typically originates on platforms preferred by children, including gaming platforms, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Online sexual interactions between children and someone they believed to be an adult were most frequently reported on Snapchat (18%), Instagram (18%), WhatsApp (11%), Facebook (10%) and Facebook Messenger (10%)<sup>2</sup>.

The average age of victims is 9.5, with offenders typically aged between 18-24.

### Online sexual harassment

Up to 28% of children have experienced unwanted sexual harassment online<sup>3</sup>. These figures are from 2017 and annual increases suggest today's figure is higher.

### Sharing of sexual images

It is illegal to make or share a sexual image of a child. This includes a child sharing a sexual image of themselves. Common risks include the taking of images without consent and the wider sharing of images originally shared only with an intimate partner.

85% of children aged 12-17 have received a request for a sexual image from a peer<sup>4</sup>.

5-11% of children aged 12-17 have received unwanted sexual images from peers.

8-9% of children aged 12-17 have had their own sexual images shared with others without their consent.

8-7% of children aged 12-17 have experienced pressure to send sexual images<sup>5</sup>.

The Child Abuse Identification Database (UK) recorded 8.3 million unique child sexual images in circulation between 2017-2019. At this time 7,900 children were identified through these images and safeguarded as a result.

These figures are from 2017 and 2019. Annual increases suggest today's figure is higher, with an estimated 500,000 images added to the database every two months<sup>6</sup>.

### Access to inappropriate sexual content

94% of children have viewed pornography by the time they are 14 years old. 10% of children have viewed pornography by the time they are 10 years old. Evidence links the age a child first views pornography with the age they receive their first phone<sup>7</sup>.

Typically, children's first experience of pornography is unintentional, with many coming across videos through social media, particularly Twitter (X), Instagram and Snapchat. The majority of parents do not believe their children have viewed pornography online, yet the majority of children report having done so. Additionally, many pornographic images and videos accessed by children depict violent or degrading acts towards women. Evidence suggests that pornography has had a significant negative impact on children's language and behaviours. 47% of young people reported that they expected sex to involve acts of physical aggression<sup>8</sup>.

## KEY RISK 2: Grooming and access to offensive, extremist and harmful content

### Grooming

"Grooming" is the process of an offender building a relationship with a child in order to manipulate them or their families, often with the aim of sexual abuse in the future.

6,800 grooming cases were investigated by the police in 2023, with the true figure likely far higher.

Grooming typically takes place over a wide range of platforms, with Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp used in almost half of cases. 6% of children have met up with someone they had previously only known online. 65% of 9-17-year-olds reported having been asked by an online-only contact to move communications to an encrypted service, with 52% subsequently doing so<sup>9</sup>.

### Access to offensive, extremist and harmful content

Up to 69% of young people have accessed hateful content, 37% have accessed violent content and 25% have accessed extremist content online<sup>10</sup>. The BBC has reported that social media algorithms offer violent and extremist content to teenage boys in particular<sup>11</sup>.

## KEY RISK 3: Online bullying

19% of children aged 10-16 have experienced online bullying in the past year<sup>12</sup>. Boys and girls are equally vulnerable. Online bullying can include name calling, threats, deliberate exclusion from an activity, sharing edited images, discriminatory comments/insults, encouragement to self-harm, and the spreading of unkind rumours.

Recent research from ONS (Office of National Statistics, 2024<sup>13</sup>) revealed that over half of children told their parents about bullying. Since the pandemic in 2020, bullying which relates to children being targeted for their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or culture has increased<sup>14</sup>.

Many incidents of bullying start in private but then continue at school and/or in a public forum. Young people often find it challenging to understand when behaviours such as online jokes, banter or 'roasting' cross the line to bullying. The risk is not only that your child may be a victim of online bullying, but also that your child may have bullied others.

## KEY RISK 4: Access to inappropriate (non-sexual) content

### Access to inappropriate (non-sexual) content

Underage access to inappropriate games or apps can be harmful both in exposure to risks and in the potential effect on development<sup>15</sup>. Many apps do not have an identifiable age rating or have user-generated content and so can vary widely and unpredictably. Games and apps identified as 18+ have content which is deemed especially harmful to children and may include gambling sites, violent content, vulnerabilities in the structure of the app which heightens risk, or even content which is not legal in some countries. Parents can check the PEGI and age ratings of apps and games to ensure suitability.

### Illegal online activity

The average age for a first criminal conviction is 37. The average age for a first criminal conviction for a digital crime is 16<sup>16</sup>.

## Step 5

Understand the key risks and read the statistics

### Access to self-harm and suicide content

There are many legal sites, chatrooms and threads which can be dangerous for a vulnerable person to visit. In particular, sites which promote self-harm or suicide have been linked to worsening mental health and have been indicated in 25% of young suicides over the past ten years<sup>17</sup>.

## KEY RISK 5: Hacking and identity theft

Research by OFCOM (2022) and Mulhall (2023) highlights that children's loss of personal information through hacking, posing or being impersonated was a significant concern for young children. Enfield schools have reported anecdotally that this is a key concern of young people who have shared login and identification information with close friends and later experienced problems, particularly when friendships break down. Issues include the wider sharing of information, stealing of online resources, identity theft, catfishing and assumption of online identity, e.g. to communicate with others.

Support is available. Please see Sources and Resources on page 32 for links to advice and reporting tools.



Report sexual abuse images/videos here: [Report online child sexual abuse imagery or 'child pornography' \(wfv.org.uk\)](#)

**ACTIVITY:** Make sure you read and understand the key risks outlined on pages 11, 12 and 13





# CO-VIEW

Spend time online together

# CO-VIEW

## Co-view your child's online activity at least once a week

Viewing or paying on the internet with your child is a great way to spend quality time together. It lets you share their interests, games, and music with you, and it encourages conversations about what they're online. As a parent or carer, this is a unique chance to help your child think critically about the content they view and how they behave online. One study (Moller, 2022) found that most carers report that parents supervise their internet use at least once a week to help them to stay safe online.

- Interact with your child as they are communicating or playing online
- Play your child's favourite game with them
- Ask your child to show you what they are enjoying doing online
- Watch your child play online
- Ask your child to show you something funny or interesting



## Interact with your child online

Be involved. Be interested. Make sure your child knows that their online world is important to you. Your own profile, join in games, send messages and ask your child to learn platform features.

## Model appropriate online behaviour

Your child looks up to you as an example. Children learn how to use the internet from their parent members and friends, even if they use it for different things. They learn how to use the internet for information, entertainment, socialising etc. Learn when to use the internet (i.e., what time of day) to spend online (from 15 minutes to hours), how to interact with others, and how to be a responsible sharer of content that is not appropriate and explaining why it's not appropriate.

Reflect on some of these questions. Use the spaces below to jot down your answers.

How much time do I spend on digital devices daily? At what time do I use my phone?

What type of content do I usually consume online?

How do I use social media apps? How do I engage in positive, respectful conversations online? How do I handle conflicts or disagreements in online spaces?

How do I filter and block content on my own device? How do I keep my child safe from inappropriate content? How do I monitor my child's online activity? How do I explain to my child the importance of not sharing personal information? AM I always honest about my online activity? How do I critically evaluate news or misinformation?

How do I show a balance of online and offline activities to my children? How do I follow my own online advice for my children?

What would you like to change about your current online habits?

*If you make small changes, start making regular or small changes!*

## Co-operate with each other to promote the well-being of all

### Look after yourself

Parents' wellbeing is more important than anything else when it comes to supporting children's safety both online and offline. There are a lot of demands on you as a parent, and keeping up with all the new technology updates and new online risks can feel overwhelming and tiring at times. Preparing a list can also have an impact on parents' mental and physical health. It's important to look after your own wellbeing before you support your child's wellbeing.

Imagine your self-life is a cup and your cup is filled by things that make you feel good, like exercising, playing/meditating, journaling, cooking, socialising, etc.

Spend some time to think about what fills your cup.

On certain days, you may feel that your cup is not as full as you'd like it to be. Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup; self-care is key! What would you fill your cup with to support your wellbeing?

The NCS's recommend 6 areas to support your wellbeing:



**CONNECT** – meet up with friends and family both offline and online.

**BE ACTIVE** – keep moving! Take part in sports and exercises that make you feel good and are highly enjoyable for you.

**TAKE NOTICE** – remember the 'good' things! Take the time to reflect on things that make you happy, enjoy positive moments and practice mindfulness.

**LEARN SOMETHING NEW** – learn a new skill like a new recipe, a language, or something creative.

**GIVE** – do something nice for a friend/family member or help your local community.

Support children to develop healthy online habits.

To support children's wellbeing online we can help them to develop healthy online habits and think about their issues and what is important to them.

Supporting children's wellbeing online first starts with making them aware of how much time they are spending on different online activities and teaching them about healthy habits. We can do this by explaining the brain's autopilot mode and using checklisted responses to understand the need for balance.

**Teach children about the brain's 'autopilot mode' and persuasive designs.**

Our brains work incredibly hard every single day, making big decisions, remembering information, critically thinking, learning, learning new skills, etc. When our brains work this hard, we might experience a low power brain mode, and our brain begins to 'delegate tasks to what we call 'autopilot mode''. This mode relies on habits, which are activities that we have repeated many times before, often without conscious thought. For example, you might have a habit of regularly checking your phone, scrolling social media or have a routine to unwind from work/school.

Many internet sites and apps are deliberately designed to take advantage of the brain's autopilot mode and keep users engaged for longer periods. Persuasive designs that include endless scrolling, notifications, likes and comments, interactive videos, and the personalised algorithm-based feeds are psychological strategies that hook users' dopamine hits.

After a long day of work or school, our mental energy can be low and we are more likely to mine use of autopilot mode. For some people, there might be a greater routine to go online or browse through their phones. While this behaviour is automatic and comforting, it can lead us to neglect other activities.



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We might prefer, such as hobbies, physical exercise, spending time with family, etc. Therefore, it is essential to help children develop a balance of healthy online and offline habits after school and on the week-ends.

### Expand balancing offline and online activities using check-listed responses

#### The water cup analogy

**Step 1**

Ask your child to write their main activities under these cups (e.g. playing games, texting friends, learning/homework, reading, chores, real-life, watching videos, playing sports, playing with friends, hobbies, and so on.



**Step 2**

Fill up the cups based on how much time your child spends on these activities. A full cup equals just enough time or the agreed time spent on the activity.

**Step 3**

Explain how an overflowing cup means they are not getting a balance of other activities that are important to health, wellbeing and socialising.

**Step 4**

Ask your child how they could would like to have a better balance. For example:

- If you mine up tomorrow and one thing changed about how you spent your time online and offline, what would it be?
- What would the change look like? What would you like to do?
- How can we (our parents/carers) help you with this change?
- Who would notice the change?

### Your garden

Your time and attention are like water and sunlight in a beautiful garden. If you focus all your attention on one area, like getting watering videos, certain plants will flourish for a while. However, other parts of your life, like sleep, spending time with family, and so on the other plants, will start to wither. To grow a healthy, vibrant garden you need to spread your time evenly, tending to all the plants, like sports, hobbies, socialising, sleep etc. This way your entire garden thrives, with each part being beautiful and balanced, which can make you feel happier.

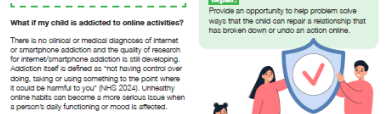
### A balanced diet for the mind

Just like a balanced diet which includes a variety of foods to keep your body healthy, a balanced 'diet' of activities nourishes your mind. Spending too much time online is like eating only one type of food – it might be enjoyable, but it won't give you all the nutrients you need. However, if you try to incorporate a range of online and offline activities, like socialising, sports, crafts, etc., it's like adding fruits, vegetables and proteins to your mind's diet, helping you to be a well-rounded person.

### What if my child is addicted to online activities?

There is no clinical or medical diagnoses of internet or smartphone addiction and the quality of research for internet/smartphone addiction is still developing. Addiction itself is defined as 'not being content over doing, taking or using something to the point where it could be harmful to your health'. Unhealthy online habits can become a more serious issue as a person's daily functioning or mood is affected.

If you are highly concerned about your child's unhealthy online habits, first try keeping and encouraging them to use the strategies mentioned above. If you remain concerned, speak to your child's school or your GP and request a referral.



Keep Your Child Safe Online | A Guide for Parents, Carers and Guardians | 21

**Regulate:** Help your child to feel calm, such as saying reassuring words, providing physical contact like hugs, going for a walk, etc. Use what works for your child. It can be difficult for children to think clearly when they are upset and they need an opportunity to feel calm. It is also important that you regulate yourself and ensure you are calm before supporting your child.

**Relate:** Label your child's emotions and connect with your child. You can share a similar experience that may have happened to you (validate the child's emotion, saying, "I recognise this is really upsetting for you, I would feel the same if this happened to me").

**Reason:** Support your child to reflect, learn, remember, prioritise and become self-assured about the difficult mood. Collect as much information as you can about the incident. It is often useful to record information too.

**Repair:** Provide an opportunity to help problem solve ways that the child can repair a wrongdoing that has broken down or undo an action online.

- Sharing your child's online world
- Balanced digital and non-digital play
- How to look after yourself



**CO-VIEW**

Spend time online together

### Interact with your child online

Be involved. Be interested. Make sure your child knows that their online world is important to you too. Have your own profiles, join in games, send messages and ask your child to teach platform features to you.

**ACTIVITY:** What does your child like to do online? How much do you know about their favourite games and apps?

### Model appropriate online behaviour

Your child looks up to you as an example. Children learn how to use the internet from their parents, family members and friends, even if they use it for different things. They learn how to use the internet (e.g., searching for information, entertainment, socialising etc), learn when to use the internet (i.e., what time of day), how much time to spend online (from a few minutes to hours), how to interact with others, and how to be safe online. This also includes turning off content that is not appropriate and explaining why it's not appropriate.

**ACTIVITY:** Reflect on the questions to the right. You can find this on p18 of the guide.

Reflect on some of these questions. Use the spaces below to jot down your answers.

- How much time do I spend on digital devices daily? At what times do I use my phone?
- What type of content do I usually consume online?
- How do I use social media apps? How do I engage in positive, respectful conversations online? How do I handle conflicts or disagreements in online spaces?
- How do I filter and block content on my own device? How do I keep my online activities secure (e.g. strong passwords, sharing personal information)? Am I careful about the websites I visit and the links that I click? How do I critically evaluate fake news or misinformation?
- How do I show a balance of offline and online activities to my children? How do I follow my own online advice for my children?

What would you like to change about your current online habits?

*If you want to make changes, start making regular small changes!*



**CO-VIEW**

Spend time online together

**Co-operate with each other to promote the well-being of all**

**CONNECT**

**BE ACTIVE**

**TAKE NOTICE**

**KEEP LEARNING**

**Give**

**CONNECT** – meet up with friends and family both offline and online.

**BE ACTIVE** – keep moving! Take part in sports and exercises that make you feel good and are highly enjoyable for you.

**TAKE NOTICE** – remember the good times! Take the time to reflect on things that make you happy, savour positive moments and practise mindfulness.

**LEARN SOMETHING NEW** – learn a new skill like a new recipe, a language, or something creative.

**GIVE** – do something nice for a friend/family member or help your local community.

### Look after yourself

Parental wellbeing is more important than anything else when it comes to supporting children's safety both online and offline. There are a lot of demands on you as a parent and keeping up with all the new technology updates and new online risks can feel overwhelming and scary at times. Prolonged stress can also have an impact on parents' mental and physical health. It's important to look after your own wellbeing before you support your child's wellbeing.

Imagine your self-care is a cup and your cup is filled by things that make you feel good, like exercising, praying/meditating, journalling, cooking, socialising, etc.



*Draw or write your favourite activities in the cup above*

### **ACTIVITY:**

How do you look after yourself? What 'fills your cup'? (p19)

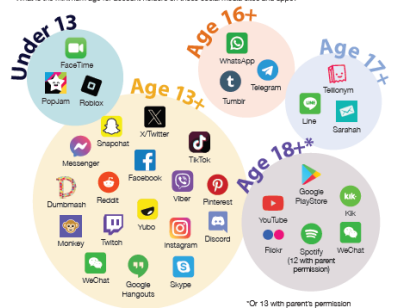




# HOUSE RULES

Set clear rules for internet use

A guide to the minimum age restrictions in place for popular social media platforms  
What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?



A guide to the minimum age restrictions in place for some popular games



## Set clear routines, rules and boundaries ("house rules")

Children need to know that you (the parent/carer) are in charge and that you will keep them safe. It is normal for children to push against boundaries, but having them there makes them feel protected and valued.

Ensure you have an explicit daily routine and rules about device use, and that you are consistent in maintaining these.

Your routines and rules need to work for you and your family.

### Keep to age ratings and guidance for apps, games and devices

Age ratings and guidance have been determined by professionals who understand the (often hidden) risks and how certain activities affect the developing brain. They work in a similar way to film certificates at the cinema.

As a parent you may not always understand why a game or app has been given its age rating or have an in-depth knowledge of some automatic features, such as chatrooms. You can check the age ratings of apps and games directly in the app store or by checking their PEGI rating (see below). We would also recommend that you explore any game or app yourself before allowing your child to use it, and that you co-view with your child.

Below are images of age rating symbols used by:



### A guide to apps which hide or password protect content

It is natural for children to want independence online but when they are accessing inappropriate content and hiding it from parents/carers/guardians, this could have a significant impact on their development, wellbeing and daily functioning.

Some children may use certain apps to hide activities or content from their parents. These are sometimes known as 'stealth' apps, or hidden apps. To find these, check for request apps such as multiple calculators or notes, or look for apps with unusual names or icons. Reviewing app settings, permissions and storage can also help to uncover hidden applications. It is also important to maintain open communication with your child so that you can discuss risks and issues as they arise.

These types of app are often on the market for a short time, and then re-released with different names and logos. Currently, the most popular obnoxious and 'stealth' apps include iSpyLock, Vault, Viruly, SpyCalc, Secret Calculator, Cover Me, HidePro, Secret Photo Vault, Private Album, Keep Safe and Calculator Photo Vault. You can find up to date guidance here: [https://www.internet-protect.com/stealth-apps?\\_a=parents\\_guide](https://www.internet-protect.com/stealth-apps?_a=parents_guide)



### Restrict online activity to daytime and communal areas

You wouldn't allow your child to wander unaccompanied around a city late at night, not knowing who they were interacting with or what they were doing. Apply the same supervision and care to your child's online activity.

Ensuring online activity occurs primarily in communal spaces provides an extra level of supervision and means your child will feel more able to approach you for support if something concerns them online. Additionally, restricting device use to daytime and communal areas allows your child space to unwind, to interact with their household, and to sleep soundly at night.

Your house rule should include boundaries about where and when devices are used. Most devices and Wi-Fi hubs have settings which allow you to restrict online activity for specific devices between specific times.

### Use filters and parental controls

It is your responsibility to understand how to set parental controls on your child's devices and to ensure these are in place. There are many instructional videos available online. The following links may be useful to you:

- How to set up parental controls on a range of devices, apps and providers: [Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | IvPCC](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/ivpcc/)
- How to set up parental controls on an iPhone or iPad: [Use Parental Controls on your child's iPhone and iPad - IvPCC](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/ios/)
- How to set up parental controls on an Android phone: [How to Set Parental Controls on your Amazon Fire Tablet | Digital Trends](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/android/)
- How to set up parental controls on the Amazon Alexa/Echo: [Set Controls for Amazon Echo on Alexa with the Parent Dashboard - Amazon Customer Service](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/alexa/)
- How to set up parental controls on Xbox: [Xbox Family Settings: peace of mind for parents | Xbox](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/xbox/)
- How to set parental controls on PlayStation: [Parental controls | PlayStation](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/playstation/)
- How to apply filters and parental controls on your home internet provider (UK: Safer Internet Centre): [Parental controls offered by your home internet provider - UK Safer Internet Centre](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/parents/)



## Spend regular screen-free time with your child

Your child deserves your attention above all else. Spending regular screen-free time together will strengthen your relationship, will support your child's development and will have a direct impact on your child's mental health. Here are some top tips for spending screen-free time with your child:

- Monitor your own screen use**  
Be honest about your own screen use. Lead by example as much as you can.
- Turn devices off at family mealtimes**  
Including adults! Build this into your family's routine and spend the mealtime talking, eating and playing family games.
- Turn devices off at bedtime**  
Devices interfere with sleep hormone production. Spend time instead talking with your child, reading stories, listening to music, and encouraging calm independent entertainment.
- Build unstructured playtime into your child's routine**  
Let your child take the lead!
- Consider your child's 'play diet' and balance digital play with social play, creative play and active play**

Children of all ages need social play, creative play and active play as part of their 'play diet'. Social play: Social play is anything which involves interacting with others face to face. Examples include board games, group projects, or simply hanging out and talking.

Creative play: Creative play for younger children involves their imagination and pretend play. Creative play for older children more often involves innovation and exploration. Examples include pretend play, setting up a 'shop', putting on a show, music, art, Lego, science experiments and projects of all kinds. Creative play can be structured or unstructured.

Active play: Active play has physical activity at its core. Examples include structured sports and activities, playing tag, playing outdoors, riding a bike, skateboard or scooter, going for a walk, playing at a playground or having a kickabout at the park.

Source: [Play Diet - LearningWorks for Kids](https://www.internet-protect.com/keep-your-child-safe/parents/)



- Clear guidance on age restrictions for apps and games
- Step by step instructions for setting up parental controls and filters
- Recommendations for house rules

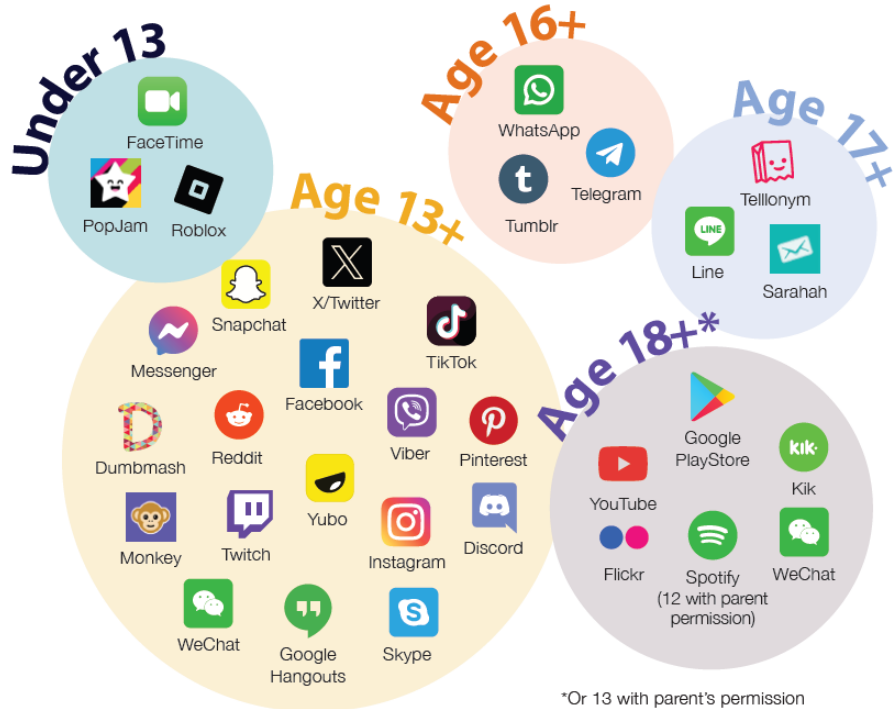


# HOUSE RULES

Set clear rules for internet use

## A guide to the minimum age restrictions in place for popular social media platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?



## App Store (Apple)



### Minecraft: Play with Friends

Build, Craft, Explore & B...

£6.99

In-App Purchases



95K RATINGS

AWARDS

AGE

CHA

4.5

Editors' Choice Apps

9+

No

★★★★☆

Years Old

Adver

## Google Play (Android)



### FarmVille: Harvest Swap

Zynga - May 26, 2015 - Everyone

Puzzle

Install Add to Wishlist

Offers in-app purchases

This app is compatible with all of your devices.

★★★★☆ (7,560)

1364 Recommend this on Google

Top Developer

## PEGI





## HOUSE RULES

Set clear rules for internet use

### Restrict online activity to daytime and communal areas

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Ensuring online activity occurs primarily in communal spaces provides an extra level of supervision and means your child will feel more able to approach you for support if something concerns them online. Additionally, restricting device use to daytime and communal areas allows your child space to unwind, to interact with their household, and to sleep soundly at night.

Your house rules should include boundaries about where and when devices are used. Most devices and Wi-Fi hubs have settings which switch off online activity for specific devices between specific times.

### Use filters and parental controls

It is your responsibility to understand how to set parental controls on your child's devices and to ensure these are in place. There are many instructional videos available online. The following links may be useful to you:

#### ACTIVITY:

What are your house rules at the moment?

What house rules would you like to have now?

What filters and parental controls have you already got in place?

What do you need to do next?

Step by step instructions on how to set up parental filters and controls: p24

- How to set up parental controls on a range of devices, apps and providers: [Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#)
- How to set up parental controls on an iPhone or iPad: [Use parental controls on your child's iPhone and iPad – Apple Support](#)
- How to set up parental controls on an Android phone: [How to Put Parental Controls on Android: Step-By-Step Guide \(bestparentalcontrolapps.com\)](#)
- How to set up parental controls on an Amazon Fire tablet: [How to Set Parental Controls on Your Amazon Fire Tablet | Digital Trends](#)
- How to set up parental controls on an Amazon Alexa/Echo: [Set Controls for Amazon Kids on Alexa with the Parent Dashboard – Amazon Customer Service](#)
- How to set up parental controls on Xbox: [Xbox family settings: peace of mind for parents | Xbox](#)
- How to set parental controls on PlayStation: [Parental controls \(UK\) \(playstation.com\)](#)
- How to apply filters and parental controls on your home internet provider (UK Safer Internet Centre): [Parental controls offered by your home internet provider – UK Safer Internet Centre](#)



## HOUSE RULES

Set clear rules for internet use

### ACTIVITY:

What is the balance of digital and non-digital play in your home?

How do you spend time with your child?

How would your child like to spend time with you?

What would you like to do differently?

## Spend regular screen-free time with your child

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### Monitor your own screen use

Be honest about your own screen use. Lead by example as much as you can.



### Turn devices off at family mealtimes

Including adults! Build this into your family's routine and spend the mealtime talking, eating and playing family games.



### Turn devices off at bedtime

Devices interfere with sleep hormone production. Spend time instead talking with your child, reading stories, listening to music, and encouraging calm independent entertainment.



### Build unstructured playtime into your child's routine

Let your child take the lead!



### Consider your child's 'play diet' and balance digital play with social play, creative play and active play

Children of all ages need social play, creative play and active play as part of their 'play diet'.

**Social play:** Social play is anything which involves interacting with others face to face. Examples include board games, group projects, or simply hanging out and talking.

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**Active play:** Active play has physical activity at its core. Examples include structured sports and activities, playing tag, playing outdoors, riding a bike, skateboard or scooter, going for a walk, playing at a playground or having a kickabout at the park.

Source: [Play Diet – LearningWorks for Kids](#)



# Recommendations for phone ownership

There is no perfect age for a young person to receive their first phone and research in this area is still developing.

Studies have shown that the age a child first owns a mobile phone is linked to the age they first view pornography and is also linked to heightened risk in many other areas (Children's Commissioner for England, 2023).

It is our recommendation that children under the age of 11 do not have their own phone and that the devices they do use are closely monitored and restricted.

It is our recommendation that smartphone use is delayed until at least age 14, and ideally until age 16. We also recommend that any device a child uses is always monitored and restricted and that family boundaries are agreed.

We recommend that caregivers agree a written contract with their child when first presented with any device, and revisit this regularly. This includes a restricted device. An example is given below for a restricted smartphone. It can be adapted for any device and family circumstance. A further example can be found here: [www.internetmatters.org/resources/digital-family-agreement-template](http://www.internetmatters.org/resources/digital-family-agreement-template).

A useful 'First Phone Checklist' can be found here: [www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/First-phone-checklist.pdf](http://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/First-phone-checklist.pdf)

AGE  
11+

for a basic phone  
or highly restricted  
smart phone without  
internet access or  
social media

AGE  
14+

for a smart phone  
with parental controls



\*\*\*\*\*

Agree a contract with your child to encourage responsible phone use.

## EXAMPLE RESTRICTED SMARTPHONE CONTRACT

This phone is a restricted smartphone. There is no internet access, no social media and most apps are restricted. There is access to standard messages, email, a safe messaging app (Starz), maps, tools, Google Classroom and some games.

[Child's name] agrees to:

1. Use this phone responsibly and with kindness
2. Talk through anything which causes concern, however small and whatever your part in it has been
3. Keep school rules regarding phone use
4. Not alter any settings, restrictions, or hide content
5. App additions will be agreed by a parent
6. Notifications and locations will be shared with a parent
7. The phone has "downtime" enabled between 7pm and 7am each day. It cannot be used between these times
8. The phone is not allowed in bedrooms and will be kept in [a communal space] overnight
9. Parents may check the phone from time to time
10. Parents may make alterations to settings from time to time

[Parent/carer] agrees to:

1. Respect [child's name] privacy, aside from occasional checks
2. Discuss and fully consider any requests to change this contract or any settings on the phone

Signed [child]:.....

Signed [parent/carer]:.....

- Clear research-based recommendations
- Model contracts

AGE  
11+

for a basic phone  
or highly restricted  
smart phone without  
internet access or  
social media

AGE  
14+

for a smart phone  
with parental controls



\*\*\*\*\*

Agree a contract with your child to encourage responsible phone use.



# Common Issues and Possible Solutions

## My child needs a smartphone to talk to extended family members.

Keeping in touch with family is important, however, we do not recommend that children have their own unrestricted smartphone, nor that they have unsupervised use of social media or communication apps which are not suitable for their age. In particular, WhatsApp can be seen harmful to because of both its encryption ability and its use in large groups where bullying issues can often occur. It is a common source of harm. We suggest children use alternative ways to communicate with family members.

## My child needs their smartphone for an alarm in the morning, so they have to have it in their bedroom.

We suggest you find an alternative alarm, such as investing in an alarm clock.

## My child has Type 1 Diabetes (or other medical need) and needs a smartphone to connect to their monitor.

This is clearly an exceptional circumstance and the child does need a smartphone to enable their medical device. However, the smartphone does not need social media or internet access and should be restricted to the medical functions only.

## I don't know how to enable or manage my child's device.

It is your responsibility to learn how to enable, support, use and manage your child's device. We do not recommend that you have an unrestricted device.

## My child spends half the week with their parent, who doesn't restrict their device. There's no point in me restricting it, it doesn't happen anyway!

We recommend you set the house rules and keep your child as safe as they are in your care. You could ask other parent to attend the online e-read the TSC guidelines.

## Children will override any restrictions placed on their device.

Research shows that children will ensure you have enabled controls have agreed a contract with you (not sharing settings on the device) communication with your child is open.

## Children won't talk to adults about online issues.

Research shows that children will approach their trusted adults as worried about an online issue. A child is reluctant to discuss issues, if they consequences like parents, carers or children may find it difficult to discuss. We recommend that you and openly with their children. You should discuss their issues and be able to manage specific situations.

Keep Your Child Safe Online | A Guide for Parents

## How do I protect my child from content they might see on someone else's device?

You can and should take precautions to ensure your child is safe at home, at school and through friends and other relationships, but you cannot manage every avenue of exposure and risk. We would recommend that you talk with your child about the possibility they may view something unpleasant or risky on someone else's device and discuss the ways they could avoid this and how they could report this in practice now. This will help your child to problem solve and to manage issues responsibly, and will give you greater peace of mind as a parent.

## All my child's friends have WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok. My child will be bullied or feel left out if they don't have access.

It can be difficult to balance safety with your child's emerging independence and desire to communicate with their peer group. This is true of allowing your child to go out of the house independently or engage in certain risky behaviours as well as using online communication tools. As a parent/carer, you have to weigh up the risks and opportunities offered by accessing social media. Although social media offers the opportunity to connect with others, it is your responsibility to keep your child safe whatever the pressures may be. Additionally, we would recommend that you encourage your child to meet up regularly with peers in person and also have time away from friends at home. These are both important for rest, reflection and general well-being.

## My child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and needs to watch YouTube while falling asleep.

Children with SEN are especially vulnerable to online risks, such as online bullying, and YouTube is also associated with many risks such as exposure to inappropriate content. We recommend that our guidance is followed for all.

## My child needs a smartphone because they walk to and from school on their own.

Having a smartphone on your person increases the risk of mugging and distraction while walking. There are countless alternative ways that you can track your child or your child can contact you if needed, for example an Armband, a smartwatch or basic brick phone, or a SIM-only mobile device. A fully restricted smartphone without apps, internet access or social media is also an option once your child is over the age of 11.

## My child has had unrestricted internet access for years. How can I impose restrictions now?

Talk to your child. Discuss the concerns you have and agree some rules together. Your child will likely have some ideas themselves, and may tell you about their own worries and how you could help.

We would recommend you start with:

- T TALK**  
Make sure you have open communication with your child and that they feel able to come to you with any worries.
- E EDUCATE**  
Explain some of the key risks and what is worrying you. Be ready to listen too.
- C CO-VIEW**  
Spend time getting to know what your child likes to do on the internet. Allow them to show you their favourite things.
- H HOUSE RULES**  
Agree some simple boundaries to begin with, such as keeping devices in communal areas overnight and introducing restrictions for some sites and apps.
- T TALK**  
Back to talking (keep your communication friendly and clear). Encourage your child to monitor their own internet use and praise them when they come to you with a concern. Agree a way forward together.

# My child needs a smartphone to talk to extended family members.

Keeping in touch with family is important, however, we do not recommend that children have their own unrestricted smartphone, nor that they have unsupervised use of social media or communication apps which are not suitable for their age. In particular, WhatsApp can seem harmless but because of both its encryption ability and its use in large groups where bullying/abuse can often occur, it is a common source of harm. We suggest children use alternative ways to communicate with family members.

## Common Issues and Possible Solutions

### *My child needs a smartphone to talk to extended family members.*

Keeping in touch with family is important, however, we do not recommend that children have their own unrestricted smartphone, nor that they have unrestricted use of social media or communication apps which are not suitable for their age. In particular, WhatsApp can be seen harmful due to issues of both its encryption ability and its use in large groups where bullying issues can often occur. It is a common source of harm. We suggest children use alternative ways to communicate with family members.

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This is clearly an exceptional circumstance and the child does need a smartphone to enable their medical device. However, the smartphone does not need social media or internet access and should be restricted to the medical functions only.

### *I don't know how to enable parental controls on my child's device.*

It is your responsibility to learn how to enable parental controls. We do not recommend that you have an unrestricted device.

### *My child spends half the week with their parent, who doesn't restrict. There's no point in me restricting if it doesn't happen everywhere.*

We recommend you set the house rules and keep your child as safe as they are in your care. You could also consider asking the other parent to attend the online e-read the TECH guidelines.

### *Children will override any restrictions placed on their device.*

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Research shows that children will approach their trusted adults if worried about an online issue. A child is reluctant to discuss issues, if they consequences for parents, carers or children may find it difficult to subject. We recommend that you and openly with their children. You should discuss these issues and be able to manage specific situations.

### *How do I protect my child from content they might see on someone else's device?*

You can and should take precautions to ensure your child is safe at home, at school and through friends and other relationships, but you cannot manage every avenue of exposure and risk. We would recommend that you talk with your child about the possibility they may view something unpleasant or risky on someone else's device and discuss the ways they could avoid this and how they could manage certain issues should they arise. Encourage your child to come to you if they've seen anything which worries them and welcome open discussion about tricky situations. Talk to your child about the person they would like to be and how they could enact this in practice now. This will help your child to problem solve and to manage issues responsibly, and will give you greater peace of mind as a parent.

### *All my child's friends have WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok. My child will be bullied or feel left out if they don't have access.*

It can be difficult to balance safety with your child's emerging independence and desire to communicate with their peer group. This is true of allowing your child to go out of the house independently or engage in certain risky behaviours as well as using online communication tools. As a parent/carer, you have to weigh up the risks and opportunities offered by accessing social media. Although social media offers the opportunity to connect with others, it is your responsibility to keep your child safe whatever the pressures may be. Additionally, we would recommend that you encourage your child to meet up regularly with peers in person and also have time away from friends at home. These are both important for rest, reflection and general well-being.

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Having a smartphone on your person increases the risk of mugging and distraction while walking. There are countless alternative ways that you can track your child or your child can contact you if needed, for example an Armband, a smartwatch or basic brick phone, or a SIM-only device. A fully restricted smartphone without apps, internet access or social media is also an option once your child is over the age of 11.

### *My child has had unrestricted internet access for years. How can I impose restrictions now?*

Talk to your child. Discuss the concerns you have and agree some rules together. Your child will likely have some ideas themselves, and may talk you about their own worries and how you could help.

### *TALK*

Make sure you have open communication with your child and that they feel able to come to you with any worries.

### *EDUCATE*

Explain some of the key risks and what is worrying you. Be ready to listen too.

### *CO-VIEW*

Spend time getting to know what your child likes to do on the internet. Allow them to show you their favourite things.

### *HOUSE RULES*

Agree some simple boundaries to begin with, such as keeping devices in communal areas overnight and introducing restrictions for some sites and apps.

### *TALK*

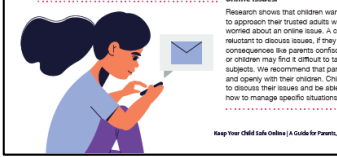
Back to talking (re)map your communication friendly and clear. Encourage your child to monitor their own internet use and praise them when they come to you with a concern. Agree a way forward together.

## I don't know how to enable parental controls on my child's device.

It is your responsibility to learn how to do this, or to seek support. We do not recommend that your child has an unrestricted device.

## My child spends half the week with his other parent, who doesn't restrict internet access. There's no point in me restricting device use if it doesn't happen everywhere.

We recommend you set the house rules for your own home and keep your child as safe as possible when they are in your care. You could also encourage the other parent to attend the online safety course and to read the TECH guidelines.



# Common Issues and Possible Solutions

## My child needs a smartphone to talk to extended family members.

Keeping in touch with family is important, however, we do not recommend that children have their own unrestricted smartphone, nor that they have un supervised use of social media or communication apps which are not suitable for their age. In particular, WhatsApp can be seen harmful due to both its encryption ability and its use in large groups where bullying issues can often occur. It is a common source of harm. We suggest children use alternative ways to communicate with family members.

## My child needs their smartphone for an alarm in the morning, so they have to have it in their bedroom.

We suggest you find an alternative alarm, such as investing in an alarm clock.

## My child has Type 1 Diabetes (or other medical need) and needs a smartphone to connect to their monitor.

This is clearly an exceptional circumstance and the child does need a smartphone to enable their medical device. However, the smartphone does not need social media or internet access and should be restricted to the medical function only.

## I don't know how to enable or my child's device.

It is your responsibility to learn how to use your device. We do not recommend that an unrestricted device has an unrestricted device.

## My child spends half the week with their parent, who doesn't restrict. There's no point in me restricting it, it doesn't happen anyway!

We recommend you set the house rules and keep your child as safe as they are in your care. You could set other parent to attend the online e-read the "TECH" guidelines.

## Children will override any restrictions on their device.

Research shows that children will ensure you have enabled controls have agreed a contract with you (not sharing settings on the device) communication with your child is open.

## Children won't talk to adults online issues.

Research shows that children will approach their trusted adults as worried about an online issue. A child is reluctant to discuss issues, if they consequences like parents, carers or children may find it difficult to be subject. We recommend that you and openly with their children. Children to discuss their issues and be able how to manage specific situations.

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## How do I protect my child from content they might see on someone else's device?

You can and should take precautions to ensure your child is safe at home, at school and through friends and other networks, but you cannot manage every avenue of exposure and risk. We would recommend that you talk with your child about the possibility they may view something unpleasant or risky on someone else's device and discuss the ways they could best avoid this and how they should manage certain issues should they arise. Encourage your child to come to you if they've seen anything which worries them and welcome open discussion about tricky situations. Talk to your child about the person they would like to be and how they could enact this in practice now. This will help your child to problem solve and to manage issues responsibly, and will give you greater peace of mind as a parent.

## All my child's friends have WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok. My child will be bullied or feel left out if they don't have access.

It can be difficult to balance safety with your child's emerging independence and desire to communicate with their peer group. This is true of allowing your child to go out of the house independently or engage in certain risky behaviours as well as using online communication tools. As a parent/carer, you have to weigh up the risks and opportunities offered by accessing social media. Although social media offers the opportunity to connect with others, it is your responsibility to keep your child safe whatever the pressures may be. Additionally, we would recommend that you encourage your child to meet up regularly with peers in person and also have time away from friends at home. These are both important for rest, reflection and general well-being.

## My child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and needs to watch YouTube while falling asleep.

Children with SEN are especially vulnerable to online risks, such as online bullying, and YouTube is also associated with many risks such as exposure to inappropriate content. We recommend that your guidance is followed for all.

## My child needs a smartphone because they walk to and from school on their own.

Having a smartphone on your person increases the risk of mugging and distraction while walking. There are countless alternative ways that you can track your child or your child can contact you if needed, for example an Airtag, a screenless or basic brick phone, or a REACHFAR device. A fully restricted smartphone without apps, internet access or social media is also an option once your child is over the age of 11.

## My child has had unrestricted internet access for years. How can I impose restrictions now?

Talk to your child. Discuss the concerns you have and agree some rules together. Your child will likely have some ideas themselves, and may tell you about their own worries and how you could help.

We would recommend you start with:

- T TALK**  
Make sure you have open communication with your child and that they feel able to come to you with any worries.
- E EDUCATE**  
Explain some of the key risks and what is worrying you. Be easy to listen too.
- C CO-VIEW**  
Spend time getting to know what your child likes to do on the internet. Allow them to show you their favourite things.
- H HOUSE RULES**  
Agree some simple boundaries to begin with, such as keeping devices in communal areas overnight and introducing restrictions for some sites and apps.
- T TALK**  
Back to talking (reap your communication flexibility and cheer. Encourage your child to monitor their own internet use and praise them when they come to you with a concern. Agree a way forward together.

# My child needs a smartphone because they walk to and from school on their own.

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## Common Issues and Possible Solutions

### *My child needs a smartphone to talk to extended family members.*

Keeping in touch with family is important, however, we do not recommend that children have their own unrestricted smartphone, nor that they have unsupervised use of social media or communication apps which are not suitable for their age. In particular, WhatsApp can be seen harassed but because of both its encryption ability and its use in large groups where bullying issues can often occur, it is a common source of harm. We suggest children use alternative ways to communicate with family members.

### *My child needs their smartphone for an alarm in the morning, so they have to have it in their bedroom.*

We suggest you find an alternative alarm, such as investing in an alarm clock.

### *My child has Type 1 Diabetes (or other medical need) and needs a smartphone to connect to their monitor.*

This is clearly an exceptional circumstance and the child does need a smartphone to enable their medical device. However, the smartphone does not need social media or internet access and should be restricted to the medical functions only.

### *I don't know how to enable my child's device.*

It is your responsibility to learn how to use your child's device. We do not recommend that you have an unrestricted device.

### *My child spends half the week with their parent, who doesn't restrict. There's no point in me restricting it, it doesn't happen everywhere!*

We recommend you set the house name and keep your child as safe as they are in your care. You could ask other parent to amend the online e-read the TCC guidelines.

### *Children will override any restrictions placed on their device.*

Research shows that children will ensure you have enabled controls have agreed a contract with you (not sharing settings on the device) communication with your child is open.

### *Children won't talk to adults online issues.*

Research shows that children will approach their trusted adults as worried about an online issue. A child is reluctant to discuss issues, if they consequences for parents, carers or children may find it difficult to discuss. We recommend that you and openly with their children. You should discuss the issues and be able to manage specific situations.

### *How do I protect my child from content they might see on someone else's device?*

You can and should take precautions to ensure your child is safe at home, at school and through friendships and other relationships, but you cannot manage every avenue of exposure and risk. We would recommend that you talk with your child about the possibility they may view something unpleasant or risky on someone else's device and discuss the ways they could avoid this and how they could manage certain issues should they arise. Encourage your child to come to you if they've seen anything which worries them and welcome open discussion about tricky situations. Talk to your child about the person they would like to be and how they could enact this in practice now. This will help your child to problem solve and to manage issues responsibly, and will give you greater peace of mind as a parent.

### *All my child's friends have WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok. My child will be bullied or feel left out if they don't have access.*

It can be difficult to balance safety with your child's emerging independence and desire to communicate with their peer group. This is true of allowing your child to go out of the house independently or engage in certain risky behaviours as well as using online communication tools. As a parent/carer, you have to weigh up the risks and opportunities offered by accessing social media. Although social media offers the opportunity to connect with others, it is your responsibility to keep your child safe whatever the pressures may be. Additionally, we would recommend that you encourage your child to meet up regularly with peers in person and also have time away from friends at home. These are both important for rest, reflection and general well-being.

### *My child has Special Educational Needs (SEN) and needs to watch YouTube while falling asleep.*

Children with SEN are especially vulnerable to online risks, such as online bullying, and YouTube is also associated with many risks such as exposure to inappropriate content. We recommend that our guidance is followed for all.

### *My child needs a smartphone because they walk to and from school on their own.*

Having a smartphone on your person increases the risk of mugging and distraction while walking. There are countless alternative ways that you can track your child or your child can contact you if needed, for example an Armband, a smartwatch or basic brick phone, or a Hi-Curbell device. A fully restricted smartphone without apps, internet access or social media is also an option once your child is over the age of 11.

### *My child has had unrestricted internet access for years. How can I impose restrictions now?*

Talk to your child. Discuss the concerns you have and agree some rules together. Your child will likely have some ideas themselves, and may tell you about their own worries and how you could help.

### *We would recommend you start with:*

#### **T TALK**

Make sure you have open communication with your child and that they feel able to come to you with any worries.

#### **E EDUCATE**

Explain some of the key risks and what is worrying you. Be ready to listen too.

#### **C CO-VIEW**

Spend time getting to know what your child likes to do on the internet. Allow them to show you their favourite things.

#### **H HOUSE RULES**

Agree some simple boundaries to begin with, such as leaving devices in communal areas overnight and introducing restrictions for some sites and apps.

#### **T TALK**

Back to talking (re)negotiate your communication friendly and clear. Encourage your child to monitor their own internet use and praise them when they come to you with a concern. Agree a way forward together.

*My child needs their smartphone for an alarm in the morning, so they have to have it in their bedroom.*

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### **How do I protect my child from content they might see on someone else's device?**

You can and should take precautions to ensure your child is safe at home, at school and through the possibility they may view something inappropriate or rely on someone else's device and discuss the ways they could avoid this and how they could manage certain issues should they arise. Encourage your child to come to you if they've seen anything which worries them and welcome open discussion about tricky situations. Talk to your child about the person they would like to be and how they could protect this in practice now. This will help your child to problem solve and to manage issues responsibly, and will give you greater peace of mind as a parent.

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### **My child needs a smartphone because they walk to and from school on their own.**

Having a smartphone on your person increases the risk of mugging and distraction while walking. There are countless alternative ways that you can track your child or your child can contact you if needed, for example an Artag, a smartwatch or basic brick phone, or a RFID Car/Bus device. A fully restricted smartphone without apps, internet access or social media is also an option once your child is over the age of 11.

### **My child has had unrestricted internet access for years. How can I impose restrictions now?**

Talk to your child. Discuss the concerns you have and agree some rules together. Your child will likely have some ideas themselves, and may tell you about their own worries and how you could help.

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**E EDUCATE**  
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**C CO-VIEW**  
Spend time getting to know what your child likes to do on the internet, allow them to show you their favourite things.

**H HOUSE RULES**  
Agree some simple boundaries to begin with, such as keeping devices in communal areas overnight and introducing restrictions for some sites and apps.

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Back to talking! Keep your communication friendly and clear. Encourage your child to monitor their own internet use and praise them when they come to you with a concern. Agree a way forward together.

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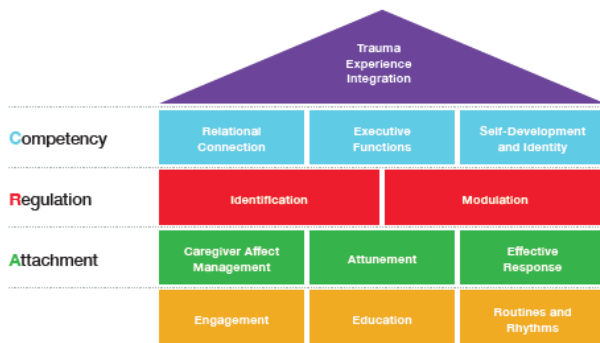
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# The ARC Framework

The Attachment, Regulation and Competency framework (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2019) is an attachment and trauma informed approach which can help guide parents/carers in planning their online safety at home.

The model is bottom-up, with the lower levels ("Integrative Strategies") acting as foundation blocks for more complex units above. It reads left to right and is a map for developing children's independent online safety skills.



ARC – Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2010; Kinniburgh & Blaustein 2005

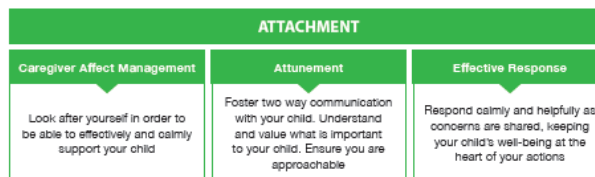
Here's how the recommendations within this guidance align with the ARC Framework:



TALK | EDUCATE

EDUCATE

HOUSE RULES



CO-VIEW

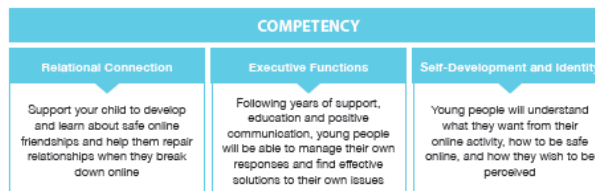
TALK | CO-VIEW

TALK



TALK | EDUCATE | HOUSE RULES

TALK | EDUCATE | HOUSE RULES



TALK | EDUCATE | CO-VIEW

TALK | EDUCATE | CO-VIEW

TALK | EDUCATE | CO-VIEW

# Sources and Resources

This guidance was written by Dr Becky Mulhall and Samantha Hill on behalf of Enfield Council.

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With many thanks to the Online Safety Working Party and to our colleagues in Enfield for shaping, supporting and improving this guidance.

## Helpful guides for specific online risks

- **Report sexual abuse images/videos here:** [Report online child sexual abuse imagery or 'child pornography' | lwf.org.uk](#)
- **Parental guidance of sexual image-sharing:** [Parent guide to sexual image-sharing among kids | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to tackle online grooming:** [Online grooming resources | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to protect children for radicalisation and grooming:** [Radicalisation of young children online | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to support your child if they are being bullied:** [How can I help my child if they are being bullied? | NSPCC](#)
- **Resources to tackle cyberbullying:** [Resources to deal with cyberbullying | Internet Matters](#)
- **Guidance on online abuse:** [How to talk about harassment and abuse online | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources on racism and racial bullying:** [Racism and racial bullying | Childline](#)
- **Supporting LGBTQ+ children online:** [Supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people online | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to tackle harm from inappropriate content:** [Learn about inappropriate content online | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to protect children's privacy and identity online:** [Online identity theft facts and advice for parents | Internet Matters](#)
- **Resources to manage in-game spending:** [How to manage in-game spending: Guide for parents | Internet Matters](#)

- **ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE:** [https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/Online\\_Relationship\\_Guide\\_For\\_Parents\\_0.pdf](https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/Online_Relationship_Guide_For_Parents_0.pdf)
- **ATTACHMENT REGULATION COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK** Blausten, M.
- **BARNARDO'S:** <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parent-and-harm/keeping-children-safe-online/how-to-keep-children-safe-online>
- **BIG LIFE JOURNAL:** Water Cup Analogy (from X by @BigLifeJournal): <https://www.biglifejournal.com/water-cup-analogy>
- **BEACONHOUSE:** [The Three R's | beaconhouse.org.uk/](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk/)
- **CHILDREN'S SOCIETY:** <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Franziska-Guide-adults.pdf>
- **CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND:** [Resources, Annual | Childline](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resources/annual-report-2023/)
- **EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION (EEF):** [Education evidence/teaching-learning-tools/feedback/](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-teaching-learning-tools/feedback/)
- **FAMISAFE:** [FamISafe – The Most Reliable Parental Control App | yondr.com](https://www.famisafe.com/)
- **GOV.UK:** [Support for parents and carers to keep children safe online – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-online)
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- **HOUSE OF COMMONS REPORT:** Impact of social media and screen use on children's participation in society. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201718/cmselect/comm/comm/houseofcommonsreport/>
- **HOW PARENTS CAN MEDIATE THE RISK OF CYBERBULLYING:** EXPLO Hume, R. (2023) Educational and Child Psychology Doctoral Thesis. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368244447>
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- **LANCSHIRE SAFEGUARDING BOARD:** [Internet Safety Glossary rev-05, 2023 | www.lancashire-safeguarding-board.org.uk](https://www.lancashire-safeguarding-board.org.uk/)
- **LEARNING WORKS:** [Play Diet – LearningWorks for kids](https://www.learningworks.co.uk/)
- **NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR ONLINE SAFETY:** [Online Safety, Guides and Resources for Parents | nationalcollege.com](https://www.ncos.org.uk/)
- **NSPCC:** [Positive online: top tips for online wellbeing | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online/)

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- 3 **Online Risks to Children: Evidence Review Main Report | nsppcc.org.uk**
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# My Action Plan

## ACTIVITY:

What three things will you do differently to help keep your child safe online?



- T** **TALK**  
Encourage two-way communication with your child
- E** **EDUCATE**  
Stay informed about the latest online risks
- C** **CO-VIEW**  
Spend time online together
- H** **HOUSE RULES**  
Set clear rules for internet use

	ACTION	The steps I will need to take to make this happen
1		
2		
3		

# QUESTIONS

