Guidance for parents and carers

Top Tips for parents and carers. https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Primary/

- **Talk to your child about what they're up to online**.
  - Be a part of their online life; involve the whole family and show an interest. Find out what sites they visit and what they love about them, if they know you understand they are more likely to come to you if they have any problems.
- **Encourage your child to go online and explore!**
  - There is a wealth of age-appropriate sites online for your children. Encourage them to use sites which are fun, educational and that will help them to develop online skills.
- **Keep up-to-date with your child's development online**.
  - Children grow up fast and they will be growing in confidence and learning new skills daily. It's important that as your child learns more, so do you.
- **Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world**.
  - Think about what they might see, what they share, who they talk to and how long they spend online. It is important to discuss boundaries at a young age to develop the tools and skills children need to enjoy their time online.
- **Keep all equipment that connects to the internet in a family space**.
  - For children of this age, it is important to keep internet use in family areas so you can see the sites your child is using and be there for them if they stumble across something they don't want to see.
- **Know what connects to the internet and how**.
  - Nowadays even the TV connects to the internet. Make sure you're aware of which devices that your child uses connect to the internet, such as their phone or games console. Also, find out how they are accessing the internet – is it your connection, or a neighbour's wifi? This will affect whether the safety controls you set are being applied.
- **Use parental controls on devices that link to the internet, such as the TV, laptops, computers, games consoles and mobile phones**.
  - Parental controls are not just about locking and blocking, they are a tool to help you set appropriate boundaries as your child grows and develops. They are not the answer to your child's online safety, but they are a good start and they are not as difficult to install as you might think. Service providers are working hard to make them simple, effective and user friendly.

What tools are there to help me keep my child safe?

As well as being involved in your child's life online, there are a number of tools that you can use to help keep them safe.

Parental controls

As a parent or carer it can be difficult to monitor what your child is up to online. Most parents and carers trust their children online, but it can be easy for a child to stumble across things that might upset or disturb them.

Filtering and moderation packages are a good way to stop the majority of inappropriate and harmful content coming into your home. They are a tool to help you set and change online boundaries in line with your child's development.

There are some great packages out there, some are free and some come at a cost. Make sure you get one that suits your family's needs and budget.

Every parental control package is different, but most provide services such as:

- **Filtering** – content to restrict access to particular sites, such as pornographic websites.
- **Time limits** – restrict the amount of time your child can be online, or set periods of time where your child can access certain sites.
- **Monitoring** – where you are informed of certain sites that your child is attempting to gain access to.
- **Reporting** – where you are provided with information about what sites your child has used.

There are three main levels for applying parental controls.

- **Internet Service Providers (ISP's).** These are the organisations that pipe the internet to your home (like Virgin Media, Talk Talk, Sky and BT). All of the major ISP's provide parental control packages. These can allow you to apply controls across all of the devices that access the internet through your home connection – such as laptops or games consoles. Further information can be found here:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Primary/Tools/Parental-controls/

http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parental-controls

- **Devices that connect to the internet.** Most computers, mobiles and games consoles now come with parental controls that can be applied. For example, within Windows and the Mac operating systems, there are parental controls that can be set for individual devices.
- **Software.** There are a wide range of packages available to buy or sometimes download for free – always look for reputable companies and check out reviews online.

Remember that parental controls will never make the internet 100% 'safe'. They should not be used as a substitute for communicating safety messages to your child. Make sure that you talk to your child about their behaviour online and remember, your home is not the only place they will be accessing the internet! Never ask your children to set these settings.

Parents' Guide to Technology

This guide http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-to-technology has been created to answer questions about particular devices that children are using or asking for. It introduces some of the most popular devices, highlighting the safety tools available and empowering parents with the knowledge they need to support their children to use these technologies safely and responsibly.

- Smartphones : This includes: BlackBerry, iPhone
- Gaming devices: This includes: Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, PSP, Nintendo Wii, Nintendo 3DS, Nintendo DSi
- Internet-enabled devices : This includes: iPod Touch, iPad

The UK Safer Internet Centre's Primary Zone http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/young-people/3-11s provides links to a wide variety of films, storybooks and other fun sites, with plenty of information to help your children enjoy their time online and stay safe on the internet.

http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/

http://www.childnet.com/young-people/primary

Follow the SMART rules: 5 Top Tips to stay safe online!

Safe:

Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

Meet:

Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present. Remember online friends are still strangers even if you have been talking to them for a long time.

Accepting:

Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files, images or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

Reliable:

Someone online might lie about who they are and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information by looking at other websites, in books, or with someone who knows. If you like chatting online it's best to only chat to your real world friends and family.

Tell:

Tell a parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone, or something, makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.