

Information and Advice

Supporting children and Young People online during Coronavirus restrictions

The internet is an amazing resource which enables children to connect, communicate and be creative in many ways, on a range of devices. But the internet is always changing and keeping up to date with your children's use of technology can be a challenge. In these unprecedented times, use of the internet will go up massively for everyone.

What can I do right now?

- Maintain an open dialogue with your child and encourage them to talk to you about their internet use: for example, who they're talking to, services they're using, and any issues they may be experiencing.
- Create a family agreement to establish boundaries and expectations on the internet.
- Give your child strategies to deal with any online content that they are not comfortable with – such as turning off the screen, telling an adult they trust and using online reporting.
- Use parental controls and filtering software to block unwanted content.
- Encourage your children to 'think before you post.' Online actions can impact not only yourself but the lives of others. Content posted privately online can be publicly shared by others and may remain online forever.
- Understand the law. Some online behaviour may break the law, for example when downloading or sharing content with others.
- Familiarise yourself with the privacy settings and reporting features available on popular sites and services.
- If your child is being bullied online, save all available evidence and know where to report the incident, for example: to the police if the law has been broken.
- Familiarise yourself with the age ratings for games and apps which your children are using as these indicate the level and suitability of the content.
- Set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online.
- Encourage your children to use nicknames (where possible) instead of their full name online, to protect their personal information, and create strong passwords for every account.
- Set up a PIN or passwords on devices to help protect personal information.

Some key messages

"You can always come to me if you need help."

"What would you do if this happened..?"

"Not everyone is who they say they are online."

"Be respectful to others online."

"The things other people post online might not show what their life is really like."

"not everything is true online."

Resources

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers

www.o2.co.uk/help/nspcc or call their free helpline 0808 800 5002 Mon-Fri 9am-7pm

www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/parental-controls