

A guide to e-safety for parents

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Our children are digital natives. They are so at home with technology it's like an extension of themselves.

The positives of technology far outweigh the negatives. As parents, we fear the potential negative impact of social media, cyber-bullying, adult content, predators – we're confronted with so many negative headlines and frightening stories.

But the internet offers amazing opportunities for learning, connecting, creating, and collaborating. While it might be tempting to ban internet access on smartphones, this simply makes children more vulnerable when they go it alone.

Just as you taught them how to cross the road safely by doing it alongside you, then taking the lead and finally doing it on their own - staying safe online needs the same approach.

Top tips to keep children safe online

1. Educate

Go on to the social media platforms that they're using and find out what they are all about. If you understand what they're up to online you will be able to better educate and advise.

It's important that children understand the impact that their online activity can have on themselves and other people, today and in the future.

2. Protect

There are parental controls and filters available to help protect children from harmful inappropriate content online.

Your Internet provider should provide parental controls to help you set safer boundaries for your children by filtering or restricting content.

Devices such as phones, tablets, game consoles and other devices that connect to the internet have parental control settings. Filtering can be very effective but no system is 100% foolproof, so education remains key.

3. Monitor

Keep an open dialogue with your child about their use of the internet. Younger children should only use the internet when they are in a family area so you can keep an eye on what they are doing and how they are using it. As they get older they will demand more privacy, but it's important to stay interested and engaged.

4. Support

We all make mistakes, particularly when we are young. Be approachable. Make sure your children know they can talk to you if something goes wrong. And make sure you know what to do if it does. Most sites now have 'report abuse' buttons where you can report inappropriate behaviour and your child's school should have procedures in place to deal with incidents if they do occur.