



Crackley Hall School

Online Safety Advice for Parents



Does your child use any of these:

- a mobile phone?
- the Internet?
- a social networking site such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube or Twitter?
- MSN, Skype or other instant messengers?

If the answer is yes, then your child is potentially at risk.

The internet is an amazing resource which enables children and young people to connect, communicate and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of devices. However, the internet is always changing, and being able to keep up to date with your children's use of technology can be a challenge. You may sometimes feel that your children have better technical skills than you do, however children and young people still need advice and protection when it comes to managing their lives online.

Issues that your child may encounter on the internet will vary depending on their age and online activities.

Online Safety – Summing up the risks

- **Conduct:** Children need to be aware of the impact that their online activity can have on both themselves and other people, and the digital footprint that they create on the internet. It's easy to feel anonymous online and it's important that children are aware of who is able to view, and potentially share, the information that they may have posted. When using the internet, it's important to keep personal information safe and not share it with strangers. Discuss with your child the importance of reporting inappropriate conversations, messages, images and behaviours and how this can be done.
- **Content:** Some online content is not suitable for children and may be hurtful or harmful. This is true for content accessed and viewed via social networks, online games, blogs and websites. It's important for children to consider the reliability of online material and be aware that it might not be true or written with a bias. Children may need your help as they begin to assess content in this way. There can be legal consequences for using or downloading copyrighted content, without seeking the author's permission. Check the age rating of the games your child plays. There is help from organisations such as Common Sense Media.



- **Contact:** It is important for children to realise that new friends made online may not be who they say they are and that once a friend is added to an online account, you may be sharing your personal information with them. Regularly reviewing friends lists and removing unwanted contacts is a useful step. Privacy settings online may also allow you to customise the information that each friend is able to access. If you have concerns that your child is, or has been, the subject of inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person, it's vital that you report it to the police via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (www.ceop.police.uk). If your child is the victim of cyberbullying, support them. Follow it up. Keep the evidence and contact school for help. Also, contact the website owner or phone company if necessary. Reinforce with your child the importance of telling a trusted adult straight away if someone is bullying them or making them feel uncomfortable, or if one of their friends is being bullied online.
- **Commercialism:** Young people's privacy and enjoyment online can sometimes be affected by advertising and marketing schemes, which can also mean inadvertently spending money online, for example within applications. Encourage your children to keep their personal information private, learn how to block both pop ups and spam emails, turn off in-app purchasing on devices where possible, and use a family email address when filling in online forms.

So what can we do...?

Learn

Learn about online safety

Be aware of the technology children are using and understand the issues surrounding online safety.

Talk

Talk about online safety

Take time to talk to your child about online safety and share your experiences with other parents and teachers.

Deal

Deal with online safety

Understand and take action with issues that arise and use the controls and tools provided to protect children.

Parental Controls

Setting up parental controls on your home broadband is quick and easy to do. All the major broadband providers offer this facility and allow you to block certain categories of website. Some let you set time limits and also block individual websites. There is a fantastic guide available at www.internetmatters.org/controls/interactive-guide/ which gives you step-by-step guidance on how to set parental controls across many different devices, including those used for gaming.

Social Networking Sites

Making a decision on whether to allow your child to have access to Social Networking websites can be tricky. If you do allow them to use social media, whether they are under 13 or not, here are some useful tips:

- **Use privacy settings.** Privacy settings aren't fool proof, but they can be helpful.
- **Encourage your child to think before they post.** Remind them that everything can potentially be seen by a vast, invisible audience and, once something's online, it's hard to take back.
- **Be a friend and a follower.** It's a good idea for parents to have access to their children's pages, at least at first, to be sure that what's being posted is appropriate. Perhaps use a parent's email address when registering, so that you can view any notifications. Knowing your child's passwords is also a good idea.
- **Keep private information private.** Don't share your home address or any other sensitive information online.
- **Be respectful of others.** The feeling of being anonymous can have a detrimental effect upon children's behaviour, as they may say feel that they can post mean things without fear of consequences. Make sure that they understand that the Internet is a giant community that works best when everyone respects each other.
- **Reporting and block features.** Teach children how and when to use them.

Online safety tips for parents of primary aged children.

✓ **Put yourself in control**

Make use of the parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. You can find out how by visiting www.internetmatters.org/controls/interactive-guide/

✓ **Search Safely**

Use safe search engines such as swiggle.org or kids-search.com. Safe search settings can also be activated on Google and other search engines as well as YouTube. You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetycentre.

✓ **Agree boundaries**

Be clear what your child can and can't do online – where they can use the internet, how much time they spend online, the sites they can visit and the types of information they can share. Agree with your child when they can have a mobile phone or tablet.

✓ **Explore together**

The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to ask them to tell you about it. Keep computers and other mobile devices in a communal area so that you can see which sites they are visiting and so they can share interesting sites with you.

✓ **Check if it's suitable**

The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide as to whether they're suitable for your child. The minimum age limit for many social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram is thirteen.

For further advice, visit these useful sites.

ThinkuKnow: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

Connect Safely: www.connectsafely.org

BBC WebWise: www.bbc.co.uk/webwise

Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org

Internetmatters: www.internetmatters.org

Childnet: www.childnet.com

Parent INFO: www.parentinfo.org

Age rating of games:
www.common sense media.org/game-reviews

Kidsmart: www.kidsmart.org.uk/parents/

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html>

www.facebook.com/stayingsafeonline