RM
Education

E-Safety

A parent's guide

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 also offers amazing opportunities for learning, having fun with friends, creating and publishing ideas, pictures and video, collaborating and enjoying music and media. While it might be tempting to ban internet access or 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.

The first choice for education

So, how do you enable your children to benefit from technology while staying safe?

Here are four key things you should consider doing at home:

① **Educate**

Educate yourself

Go on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Tumblr, Pinterest and Pheed to find out what they are all about.

Educate your children

Talk about what you should and shouldn't

- **share** - your name, address and any personal information
- **say** - anything you wouldn't say to someone's face or that could be unkind
- **do** - e.g. arrange a face to face meeting with someone you 'met' online

Make sure your children understand that their 'digital footprint' can be seen by school, universities, colleges and employers in the future so it's important to exercise caution now.

② **Monitor**

As far as you can, engage with your children and talk about what they are doing online. Younger children should only use the internet when they are in a family area and you can keep a constant eye on what they are doing. As they get older they will demand more privacy, but it's important to stay interested. Ask them to show you their social media feeds, share yours with them, 'follow' or 'friend' them (for as long as they will let you!) and keep the lines of communication open.

③ **Protect**

There are filtering systems available that will block unsuitable content. Some are free, others you can buy (see below for links). Filtering can be very effective but no system is 100% foolproof, so education remains key.

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 occur.

Our guide to the best e-safety resources for parents

Free-of-charge filtering products

Norton Family
https://onlinefamily.norton.com/familysafety/loginStart.fs

Microsoft Live Family Safety
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows-vista/protecting-your-kids-with-family-safety

Paid-for filtering products

Esafe protect@home
http://www.esafeeducation.co.uk/forhome.php

Norton Family Premier
https://onlinefamily.norton.com/familysafety/basicpremium.fs

Links

CBBC Stay Safe
http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/topics/stay-safe

Childnet
http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers

Kidscape
www.kidscape.org.uk/helpline/index.asp

Family Lives
www.familylives.org.uk

Videos and Resources

Primary:

Think U Know
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Primary

Child Focus E-safety video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5kW4pI_VQw

Childnet
http://www.childnet.com/resources/the-adventures-of-kara-winston-and-the-smart-crew

Secondary:

Think U Know
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Secondary

Cyberbullying toolkit
http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/cyberbullying-toolkit

Childnet International e-safety activities
http://www.childnet.com/resources/know-it-all-secondary-toolkits

CEOP 'Consequences' video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hK5OeGeudBM&safe=on

CEOP 'Where's Klaus' video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IOOn2wR8bU&safe=on