Parenting in a DIGITAL WORLD

2simple

Welcome

The digital world is vast, exciting and forever evolving at such a pace that parents often find it hard to keep up. Our children have never known life before the online world and are getting more and more tech savvy at an earlier age. This causes many of us anxiety because we are not experts, we have not grown up in the age of online technology and we have not had childhood experience to draw upon when providing guidance for our own children.

However, the digital world doesn't have to be considered a place of worry for parents; in fact, it can be embraced as a tool for building a better future for us all.

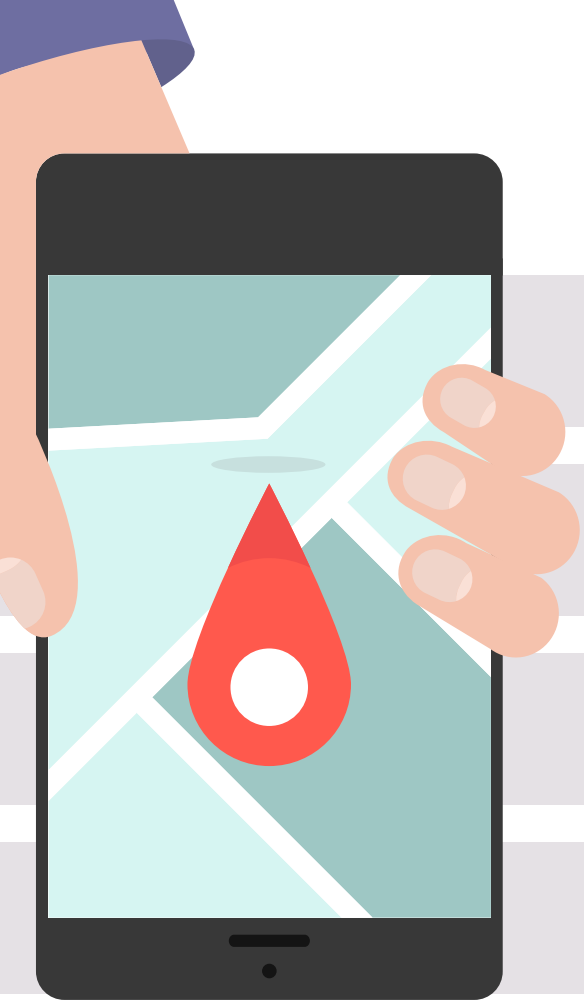
2Simple have put together this informative guide to help support you in enabling your child to grow into a responsible digital citizen who is able to keep themselves safe while, at the same time, getting the very best from the digital world.

In this guide, you will find tips and advice for each of the key areas of online safety for primary-aged children. Each of these areas is further broken down into tips for parents of children aged 5 to 7 and for those of children aged 7 to 11.

SEN Guidance

The tips and advice have been created with the rationale that they are flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of your child including those with **Special Educational Needs.** There are many brilliant resources readily available online that support children with a range of Special Educational Needs. Childnet International is an excellent starting place for resources and links to other highly reputable providers of free advice and resources.

https://www.childnet.com/resources/kia/know-it-all-for-teachers-sen



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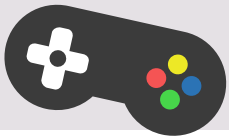

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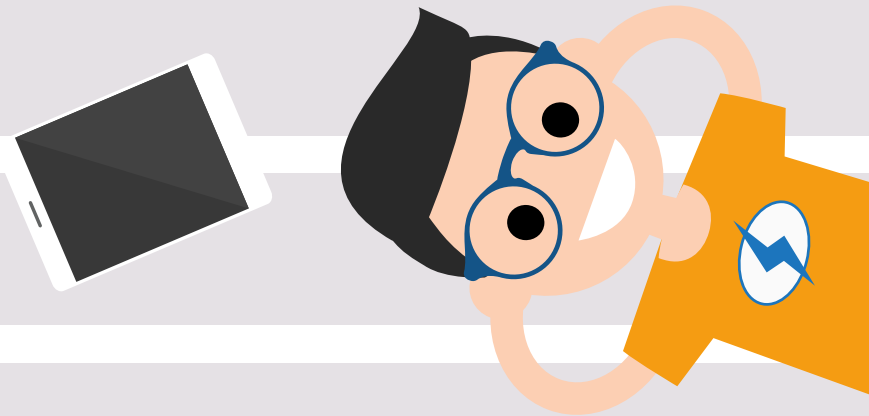
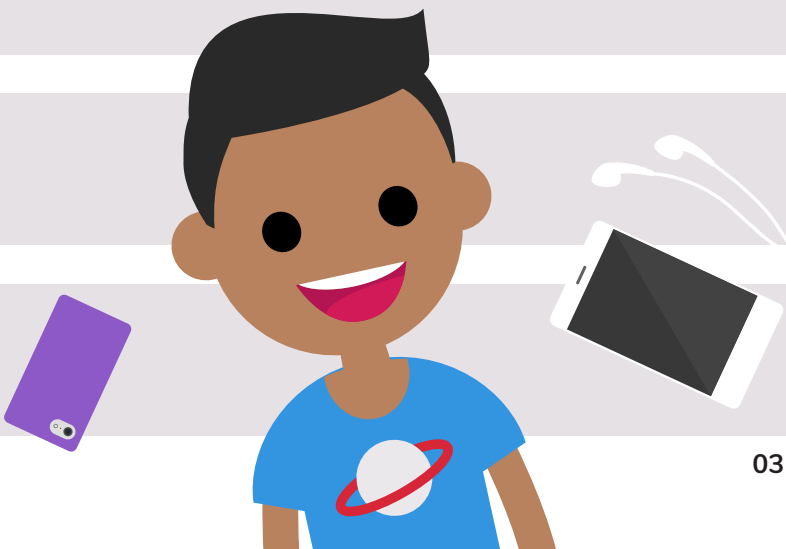




Being your child's role model

When children are very young, we are their principle role models. Advice and modelled behaviour at an early age will help to protect your child when they reach the stage of balancing your influence with that of peer pressure and adolescence. Regardless of how quickly the digital world is changing and of our ability to keep one step ahead of our children, by following some straightforward tips we can maximise their chances of growing into safe and responsible digital citizens.

Age appropriate content & PEGI ratings

There are so many entertaining, yet addictive, games and apps out there that aren't always suitable for younger children.

There can be huge intrigue and temptation for younger children to access games and apps that older members of the family are using. Pan European Game Information (PEGI) ratings exist to help consumers make an informed decision about game purchases and they shouldn't be ignored. They are based on the following content-related criteria: violence, grown-up themes, discrimination, fear, use of language, gambling and illegal activities.

Many popular games offer online player communication capabilities and encourage the purchase of add-ons to advance within the game. Demonstrate your own scepticism when it comes to in-app purchases.

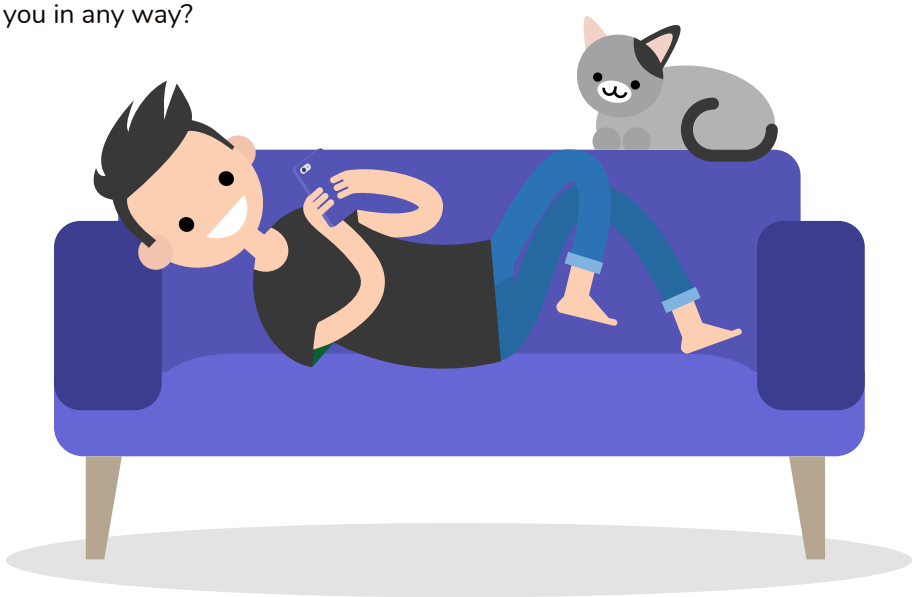
Is it really a good idea to spend money on 100 virtual diamonds when you have limited funds? If your child receives pocket money, you could suggest that they make their own decisions about how to spend it, including on the purchase of apps and add-ons.

Apps use

Consider how you are using communication apps with friends. Try to model habits that show your own awareness of the permanence of online information. If anyone was to see the contents of your communications would this embarrass you in any way?

Appropriate times

If your child sees you on your smartphone or tablet during dinnertime or late into the evening, what message is this giving them? You could allot explicit technology-free times for focusing on conversation or other activity.



It goes without saying that children pick up both good and bad habits from us. We can help them make sensible choices by establishing our own good behaviours when engaging with the digital world. Here are some areas in which you can help your child develop simple habits by modelling them yourself and discussing them informally.

DEMONSTRATE YOUR OWN 'NETIQUETTE'

Model appropriate behaviour for your child, especially if they have access to your devices or you are using them together. Avoid commenting on, posting or following social media posts that you wouldn't want your child to see. Always post and communicate respectfully.

Openness

Establish open, non-judgemental, supportive communication about the use of digital devices. This way, if there are any problems, it is much more likely your child will tell you about them in good time. Always stress that your aim is to keep them safe and happy, not to restrict them.

Personal information

Only share information online that you know wouldn't cause any harm if a person with bad intent, or even an employer, were to see it.

Security

From virus protection to filtering, talk openly about why this is important and the purpose of having such security in place. If you are downloading apps for your child, focus their attention on the privacy requirements of the app; don't just click 'Accept' without reading them. Question why some apps ask permission to access all your files or photos. What could they be used for? If you find the privacy terms unacceptable, do not install the app – this will help your child to develop the same good habits.

Sharenting

We have to admit that we like to share the positive moments in our child's life; social media is certainly a platform to do this. However, do we fully understand the potential risks of posting to social media? How often do we ask our child if we have permission to put an image of them online? Do we think it is OK to post about our child and share content because our accounts are only visible to friends? Do we understand the damage that posting and sharing content about our child could have in the future? These questions must be considered carefully. If in doubt, don't share!

Rules

Establish rules that all family members abide by, including when accessing the internet away from home. Talk through strategies that your child can use if they are put in an uncomfortable position when you are not around.

Getting to grips with devices and their software

Use technology to your advantage.

Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

Many ISPs include filtering as part of your home internet package; take advantage of this, if you can, to filter content. However, be aware that if children are using mobile devices outside the home, then they can bypass these filters.

Safety Apps

You might be able to control access by using apps on your child's devices, either those that come with the device or those that you install from an app store. Some apps provide reports of what your child has searched for or browsed.

None of these controls are 100% reliable so open communication is still key. It's also important to recognise that children are entitled to some privacy themselves and you might be in danger of losing their trust if the measures that you choose feel too invasive for your child.

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Tel: 0208 203 1781

Email: support@2simple.com

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and not in control when it comes to technology. Fortunately, there are steps we can take as parents to feel in control, the age old saying 'knowledge is power' is key. We should never be afraid to immerse ourselves in the technology our children are using. If you hear about a new app/device, try it out, read about it, find out for yourself what it does and if there are any pitfalls for children. Some of the tips on these pages will go someway to supporting your quest for being one step ahead of your child.

Devices everywhere

Devices are getting smaller and more capable and can be used almost anywhere. This has obvious benefits but also some drawbacks. You won't always see what your child is doing on a device. Carefully consider this and the safeguards that you will put in place. Children's devices are likely to divert their attention away from other things that they are doing; they may sit down to do some homework, get a message on their device and an hour later, they still haven't started their work.

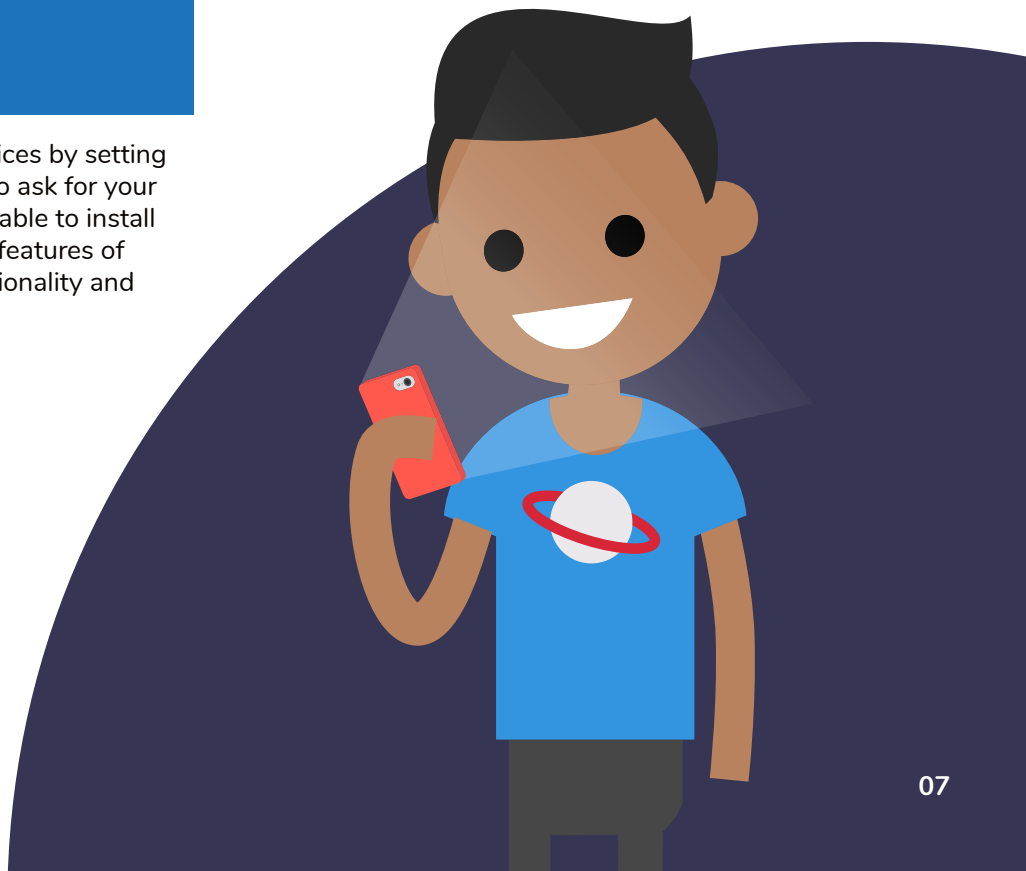
Apps

Keep control of the apps installed on devices by setting your security so that your children have to ask for your permission/password entry before being able to install apps or make purchases. Investigate the features of apps, including GPS, nearby device functionality and casting.

Agreements of Use

When you download an app, you are often asked to give permission for the developers of the app to access a variety of personal details. It's very easy to ignore these agreements but be aware that the data is collected and often sold to third parties.

Some apps appear to be developed purely so that the developers can sell on your personal data. Apps may collect information such as your name, age and address, as well as track your website visits, online purchases and your location, even when you do not have the app open.



Digital footprint and online reputations

AGES 5 TO 7

From an early age, work with your child online, accessing content together and discussing tracking features, such as cookies. If your child has an understanding at an early age that their interactions in the digital world are recorded, they are far more likely to develop a careful approach.

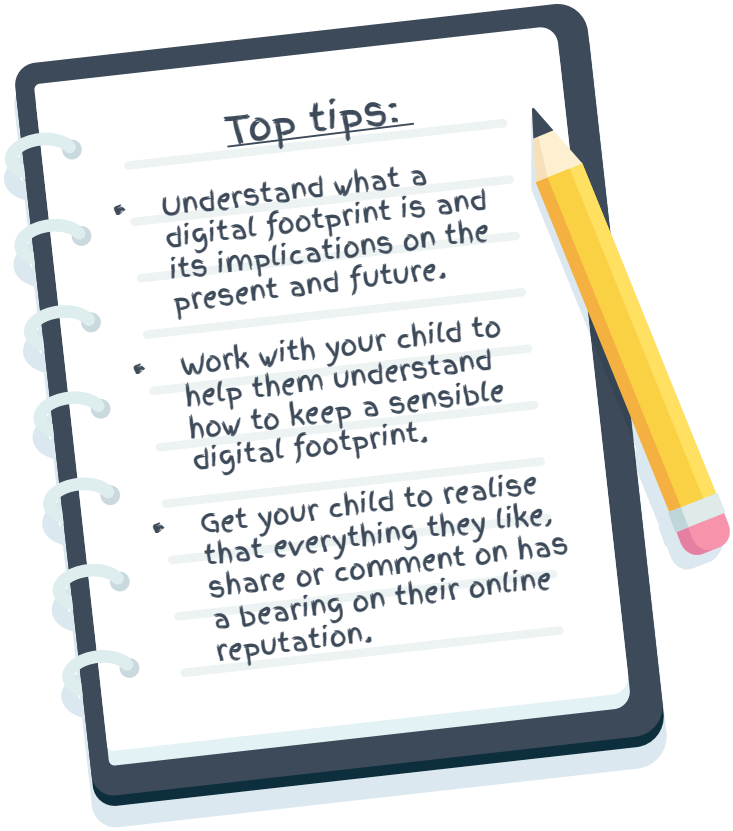
As a start, you could search your own name on the internet with your child to see what your digital footprint contains. Discuss how the information got there and if there is anything that you are unhappy about.

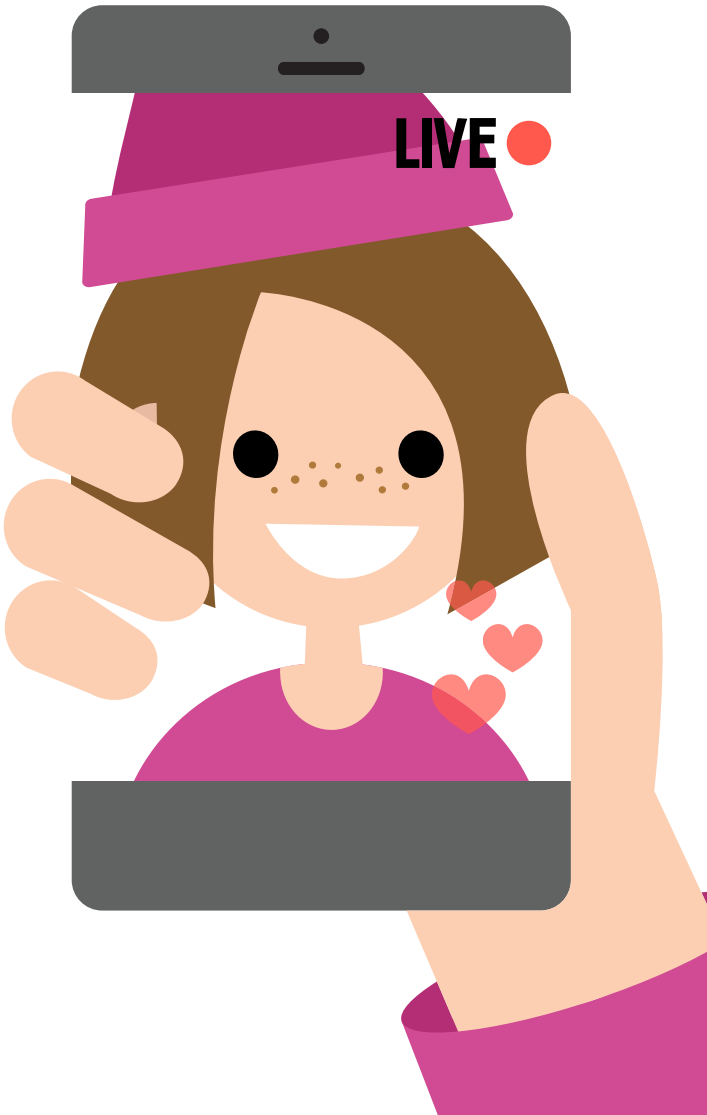
Use this activity to stress the importance of asking for permission before sharing anything online, including asking your advice about names to use if playing online games.

Did You Know?

73%

of 8-12s have shared a photo online. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)





There has been lots of noise in the media about digital footprints and online reputation. We hear of people losing their jobs or even being prosecuted for their activities online, as well as individuals who exploit naive users of the internet for financial or other reward. In contrast to this, we also learn of people becoming victims of organised-crime gangs.

A digital footprint is a trail of data created by individuals who use the internet and includes searches, website visits, information submitted to online services (social media accounts, etc.) and emails. Once we are aware of this, we need to consider the implications a digital footprint can have on our own and on our child's present and future online reputation.

Everything your child accesses, comments on, 'likes', shares or posts will leave a trail on the internet that forms their own digital footprint. The content that your child accesses, could have a bearing on the online reputation they are forming. For example, if they are 'liking' or following particular posts, other people will form opinions of them. This digital record will stay with them and be connected to them in the future; the impact of this is out of their control.

AGES 7 TO 11

Build on the points covered in ages 5 to 7.

Children at the upper limits of this age range are likely to be sharing more online. Using a range of browsers, search your own name on the internet with your child to see what your digital footprint contains. How did the information get there? Is there anything that you are unhappy about? Discuss how you might get the information removed.

Look at sources of online information about people, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms. Help children to understand that when content is uploaded to these platforms, it also gets shared elsewhere and is out of your control. Even platforms that have limited time content, such as Snapchat, will be storing the information somewhere and, at some point in the future, it is possible that it could all be made public. People may also take screenshots, which can be shared long after an original post has been removed.

A strong sense of self and good self-esteem will make children hesitate before sharing content for a 'quick thrill', 5 minutes of popularity and lots of 'likes'.

If you have allowed your child to have any social media accounts or online game logins, you must stress the importance of 'locking down' these accounts. For example, if they have access to a video-sharing account, discuss the potential negative implications for their reputation if they or others post inappropriate content or comments.

1 in 15

children aged 8-15 have broadcast themselves live on popular social media sites. (Childnet, 2017)

Content

AGES 5 TO 7

Your child will more than likely be aware that some online content is rude, upsetting or generally inappropriate for them. Use search engines with them, demonstrating safe search settings as well as reading content descriptions on apps before installing them. Get them into the habit of always doing this.

If your child has seen something inappropriate, discuss it with them and deal with it together.

Did You Know?

Over

45%

of children who access live stream content have witnessed violence or hatred content (NSPCC, 2017)

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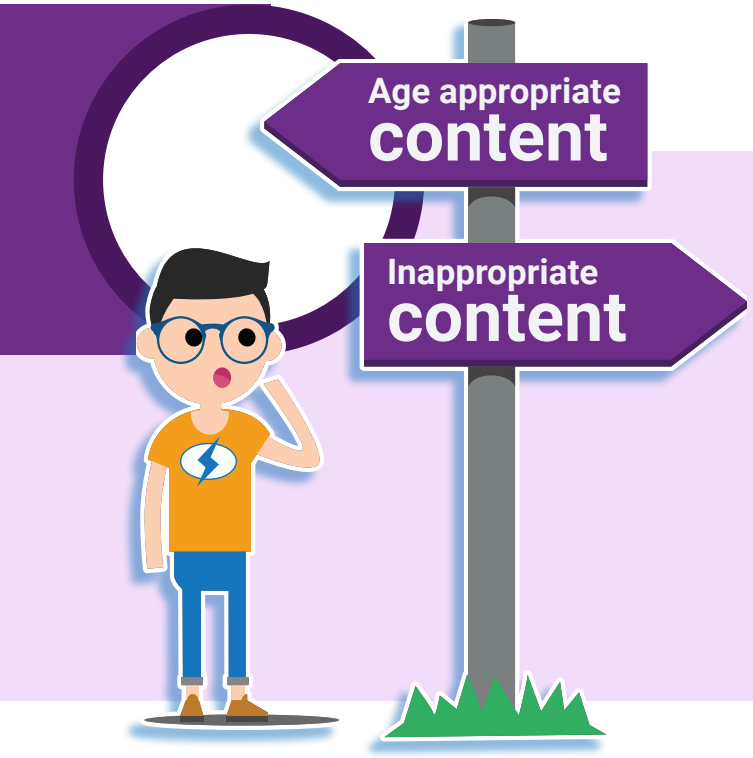


The possibilities that the online world gives to us all for improving our lives, in terms of knowledge, processes, efficiency, convenience and communication, are amazing.

However, controlling the content that we and, most importantly, our children have access to can be challenging. There are no guaranteed safeguards that adults can put in place to prohibit inappropriate content being accessed.

Therefore, the key to safeguarding our children is to support them in becoming informed and empowered users of the online world, recognising potential risks and dealing with inappropriate content.

AGES 7 TO 11

Build on the key points in ages 5 to 7.

By now, your child will quite likely be fully immersed in the digital world. Peer pressure will have a stronger effect on your child than before, regarding content, use of digital devices and possible interactions online. Your child may very well want to play collaborative games online, download apps that their friends have and search for content that is popular among their peers.

Don't simply stop your child from doing what their peers are doing but explain any decisions you make regarding accessing content, apps or devices. Remember the tips about being open: if you don't give a child a clear explanation, they won't recognise your decisions as being justified or fair.

Your child will have more developed opinions of others and the world, which can have drawbacks when using social media. Whether your child is using social media or simply commenting on educational sites, monitor the comments they post and how they interact. Obviously, discourage any negative language and over-familiar comments, including personal information.

Ratings are intended to protect children against exposure to content that will affect their mental health and well-being. Seeing explicit material online is upsetting and changes the way children view relationships and other people.

81%
of children aged 8 - 11 use YouTube. (Ofcom, 2017)

71%
of 5-7s use YouTube. (Ofcom, 2017)

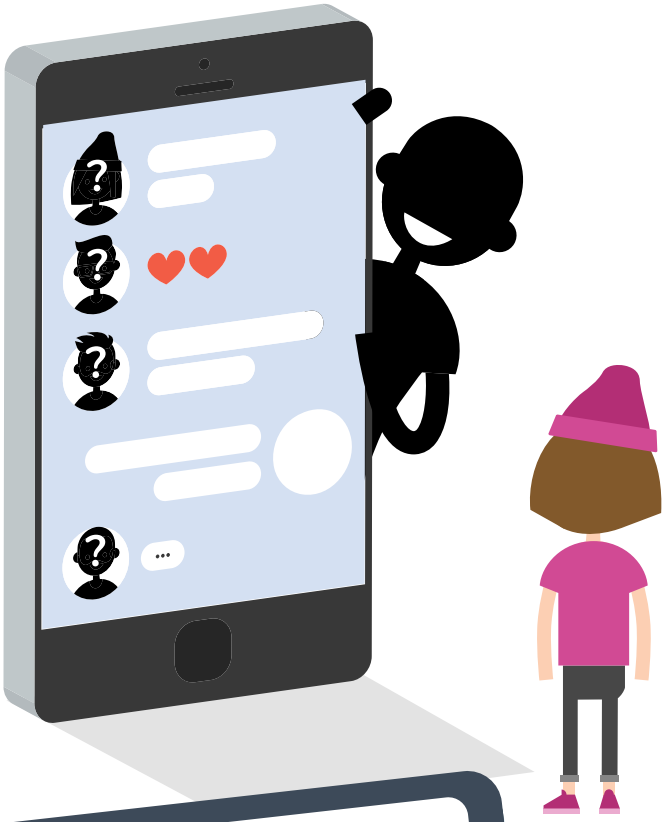
Self-image and identity

AGES 5 TO 7

At this age, children need to understand that although we talk about their digital footprint being an image of them online, not all digital footprints are a true reflection. People can pretend to be other people online. An adult man couldn't pretend to be a young girl in the real world but he can online because you can't see him and, sadly, not everyone is honest.

Your child can take advantage of pretending to be someone else online in order to protect their own privacy. They should learn in school about not using their real full name online, about using a picture that represents them (an avatar) rather than their real photo and about protecting private personal details, such as their address and school.

When you share images and information on social media, talk about how you protect your own privacy by not over-sharing and how you protect their privacy by not sharing things about them. This will help them to develop a feeling of responsibility to others as well as themselves.

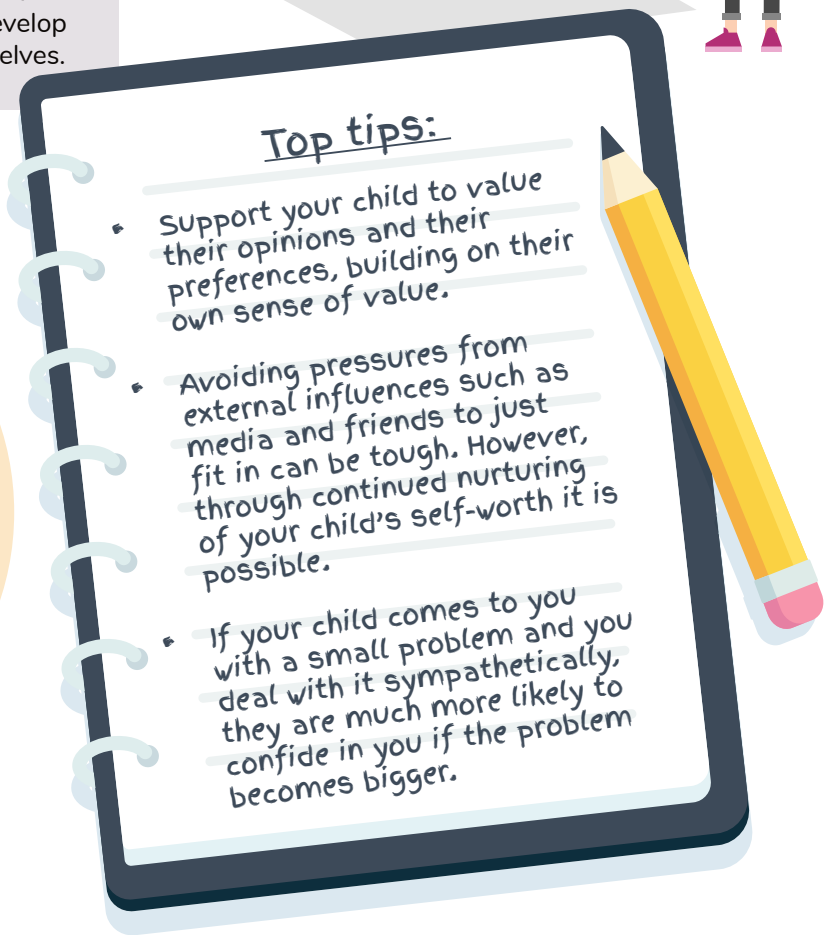


Did You Know?

Almost

2 in 5

children have received negative comments on a photo they have posted. (UK Safer Internet, 2016)



Probably the greatest factor in your child's protection from online threats is their own sense of self and self-esteem. Helping your child to value themselves, their opinions and their preferences contributes to their own sense of value. They are then much less likely to make undesirable choices and less likely to feel under pressure to fit in with the crowd.

Your child should have an ingrained belief that you are on their side, that no matter how big a problem seems and even if they have knowingly done something wrong, you will help them to sort it out. If your child starts to come to you with small problems and you deal with them sympathetically, they are much more likely to confide in you if the problems get bigger.

AGES 7 TO 11

Review the points in ages 5 to 7 and build on them further.

Children will have a more developed sense of their online identity. In some places, such as in closed groups of friends, they might appear as themselves. In other places, they develop strategies to be anonymous, such as using avatars and nicknames in online gaming.

Many children will become more aware of people promoting themselves online and turning this into a successful career. They might follow and admire people who appear to live very public lives. There is nothing wrong with this but you can help them to reach a balanced outlook by talking about the downsides of public life. Use current examples to show how one false move may have negative repercussions if you are in the public eye.

81%
of 8-11s go online for 13 ½ hours per week. (Ofcom, 2017)

79%
of 5-7s go online for around 9 hours per week. (Ofcom, 2017)

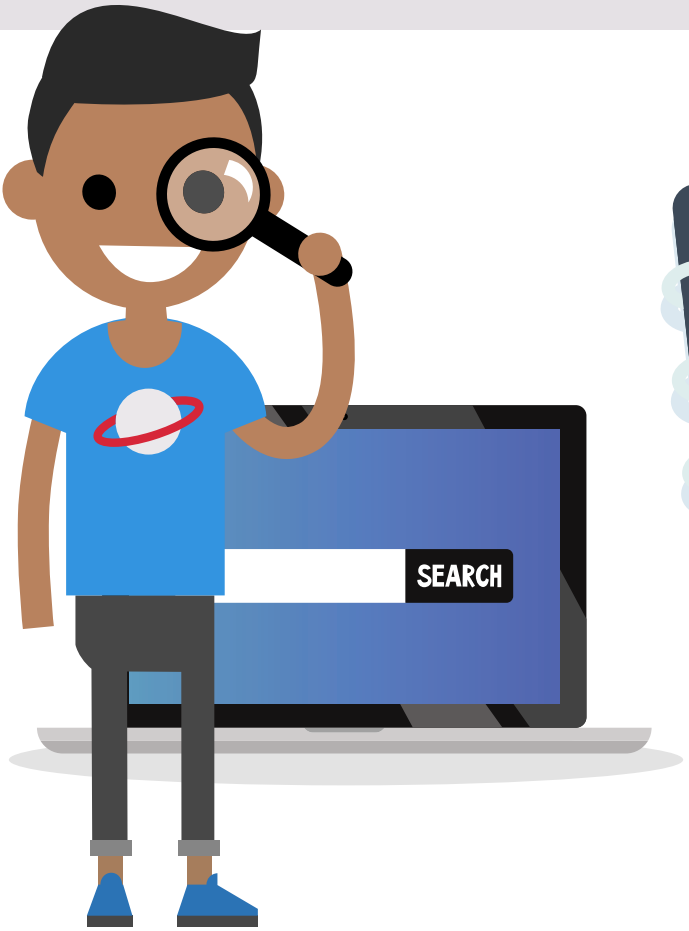
Developing Scepticism

AGES 5 TO 7

From this age, children should learn about the ease with which very professional looking websites can be made and how people may abuse this to access their private information.

Tell your child that anyone can create genuine looking posts containing many comments that appear to be supportive. Encourage children to think for themselves. Does the website seem too good to be true? If children come to you with an improbable tale, talk to them about checking their sources and help them to do this.

When children have homework that involves internet research, model a process of looking for reputable websites for information.



Did You Know?

On average,

8 of 10

children access the online world through a smart phone (Global Kids Online Project, 2017)

This statistic supports the idea that they are independently accessing the internet often away from adult supervision.

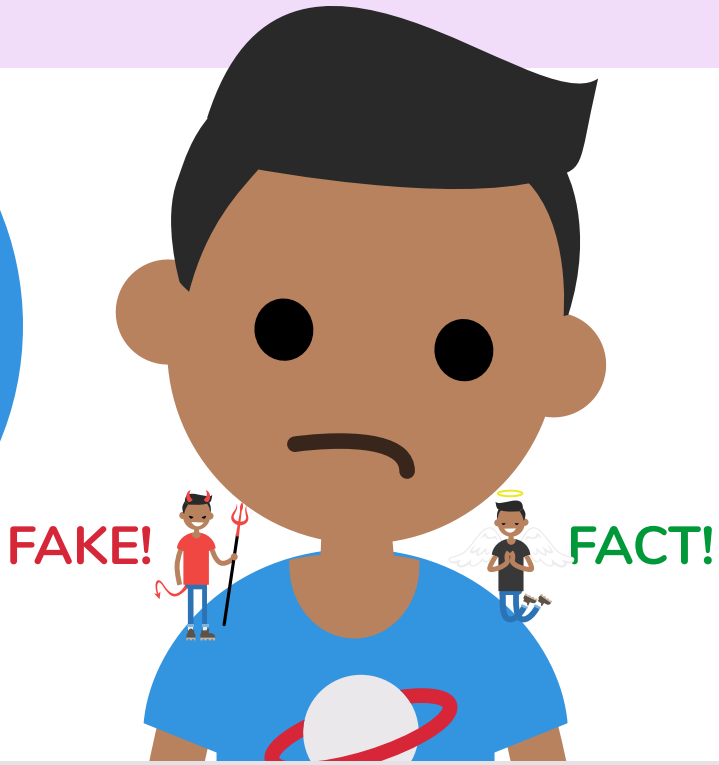
Top tips:

- Encourage your child to think for themselves and build on this ability as they get older.
- Help your child recognise that anyone can now create professional looking websites and legitimate looking posts.
- Help you child categorise what they see or hear online into either a fact, belief or opinion. Support them with this skill by sharing examples of fake and real information online.

There is something about seeing well-formatted and illustrated content on screen that makes us believe it is true. More and more companies are providing powerful, easy-to-use tools that enable tech amateurs to build their own websites and apps. Groups and individuals are exploiting this for personal gain, which can have damaging effects on others. Therefore, developing scepticism is a vital component of staying safe online.

30%

of 8-11s find it easy to check if an image or video is truthful. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)



AGES 7 TO 11

Children should continue to develop their scepticism and critical thinking skills. They might start using email to communicate and could then become a target for phishing scams that look very genuine. Share information about scam emails that you receive and talk about what you do to handle these.

Children will probably hear the term 'fake news'; support them in seeking the truth of stories by using reputable sources to check information online.

Peer influence will be getting stronger; support your child in having the strength of their convictions and in exposing 'fake news' to others.

Children may watch videos online and see amazing images; talk about how easy it is to manipulate images.

You can have a lot of fun doing this but also be aware that 'impossible' images may affect self-esteem if children are trying to live up to them. If they know that most of these images are enhanced and that perfection is not possible, this relieves the pressure upon them. To counter the negative influences, select media that empowers your child and supports their belief in themselves.

Help children to categorise what they see online or hear from others as a fact (backed up by valid evidence), a belief (something a person believes to be true but doesn't have evidence for) or an opinion (a person's view on something where there may be no right or wrong answer). People online might disguise false information as fact.

Online relationships

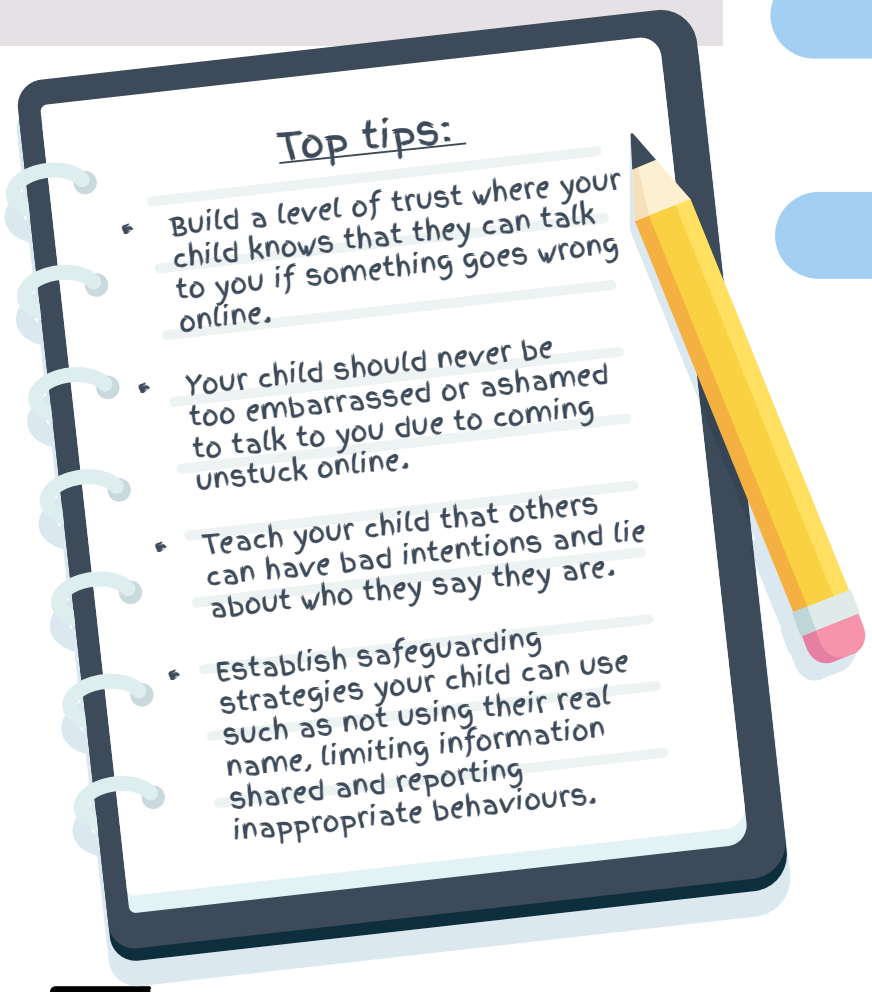
AGES 5 TO 7

At this age, online relationships are likely to be with people that children know in real life and managed by their parents or teachers. Model polite online behaviour and relate this to the way they behave when face-to-face with someone.

Ensure that children are clear about what to do if they are upset by something online, including someone trying to make them do something wrong.

Reinforce that your child should never have feelings of guilt or embarrassment if they have come unstuck online. Speaking about mistakes or inappropriate interactions is essential.

26%
of 6-year olds use the web for social media. (Opinion Leader, 2016)



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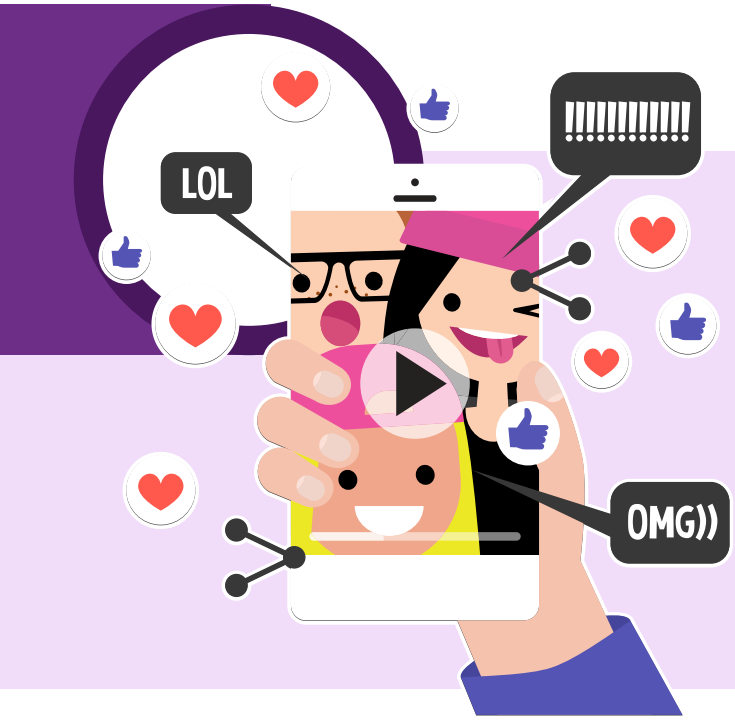


The lines between reality and the online world can be easily blurred and distorted. It's incredibly hard for younger children to comprehend that someone online might not be who they claim to be and to understand that the intentions of others could be very harmful.

We have a vital role in modelling how we interact with others online, even if it is a collaborative online game that uses non-identifying information such as gamertags. Left to their own devices, children can find themselves in situations that could spiral out of control. They should be taught to exercise the same caution when interacting with strangers online as they do in the real world.

AGES 7 TO 11

Children may want to begin online communication with strangers even though most platforms for doing this are restricted to those aged 13 and above. Discuss why this is the case and make them aware that the restrictions are there to keep them safe as some content may not be appropriate for their age group.

Ensure that children have a good understanding of how to protect their own identity when online. This includes password security, keeping their data safe, being aware of businesses that might want to gain access to their data and how the actions they take online influence their digital footprint.

Help children to recognise the value of sleeping on a problem if they are tempted to reply in anger on social media. Children should keep in mind that when they get angry and have a big argument at home or with a friend, it is usually quickly forgotten. However, online it can be there permanently and if their opinion changes they may become embarrassed by their online record.

Children should demonstrate that they understand the need to be polite online and to step back from those who are not. Talk about online grooming from the angle that some people are not who they say they are and will try to make you do things that you shouldn't. How could these people then use that against you?

Maintain open communication so that your child feels able to come to you for support even if they know they have been unwise in their prior actions.

Liargirl453
Hi, do you want to team up for this game? Where do you live?

Superman722
Hello Liargirl453. Sure, let's complete this mission together! I can't tell you where I live though.

Did You Know?

1 in 6

of all 8-11s play games against people they have not met in person (Ofcom, 2017)

Bullying, wellbeing and mental health

AGES 5 TO 7

At this age, the approach should be teaching children about how we should treat other people in the real world as well as online. Children must understand how their actions can affect another person positively or negatively and how their interactions and submission of information online may impact negatively upon themselves.

It is useful for children to think about the trustworthy people that they can go to if they are upset about the way they are treated online.

Your child's well-being is the reason that you are interested in their online safety. Use this notion to reinforce the reasons for the choices you make for your child. When you restrict screen time, talk about how this is for their physical health (so they do other activities) and mental health (because staring at a screen can affect sleep and well-being).

Maintaining open communications and using devices in shared areas help your child to be happy and healthy while still being able to enjoy the online world.

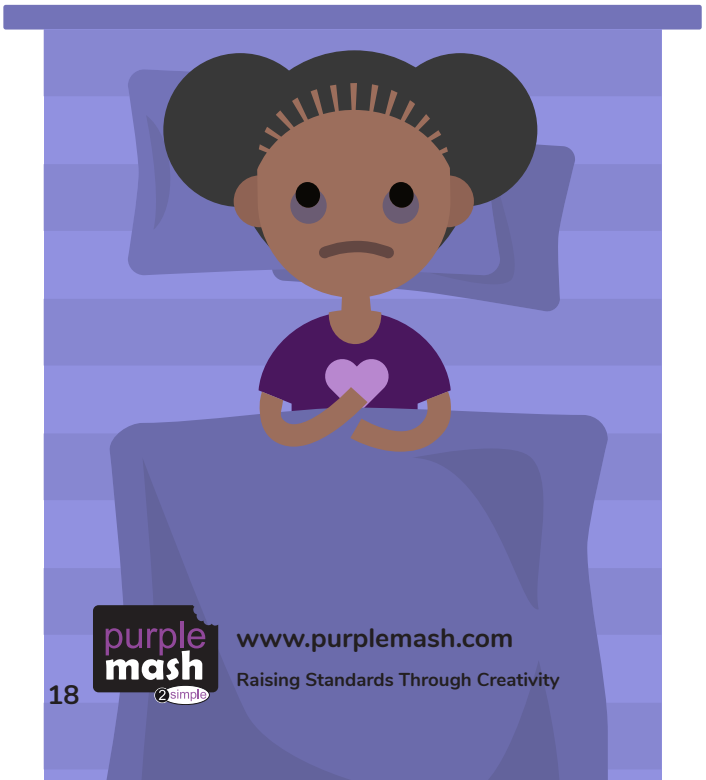
Did You Know?

48

is the average number of likes children say they need to get on a photo before they feel happy. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)

Top tips:

- Teach and establish behaviours for how we should treat others and be treated ourselves online.
- Ensure your child has several trustworthy people they know they can go to for support (not just you).
- Teach your child how to save evidence of inappropriate behaviours from others such as saving messages.
- Stress the importance of protecting personal privacy, particularly as your child gets older and is statistically more likely to come into contact with strangers online.



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Raising Standards Through Creativity

Our children live in a fun and exciting place, where they can now communicate with others anytime, anywhere. Unfortunately, this also has drawbacks and stresses from social interactions and bullying can now be experienced at home. Recent studies have found that social media companies have inconsistent approaches to tackling cyber bullying and promoting strategies for well-being and mental health. With this in mind, you can't rely on social media giants to protect your child.

AGES 7 TO 11

At this age, children should start to consider the specific features that differentiate cyber bullying from face-to-face bullying as well as the overlap between the two. Cyber bullying can be more relentless as it can continue 24/7.

As children get older, they are more likely to come into contact with strangers online. Talk about why strangers may feel less remorse about bullying behaviour and why this makes it even more important to protect children's personal privacy on social media. Less secure children may be more susceptible to peer pressure to behave a way that makes them more vulnerable to bullies and then less likely to seek help. It's important to keep the lines of communication open and to seek support from school or specialist agencies if you are worried about your child.

Ensure that your child knows how to take screenshots and save messages as evidence to show to a trusted adult. Encourage children to speak up for others or report bullying that they witness.

Talk about the known impact of screen time on sleep and, therefore, on their ability to function well the next day. This has an impact on joining in with other activities and doing well at school.

Children are reaching an age where fitting in and being seen in the best light is important. You can help by recognising the pressures they are under from peers and social media and how this might make them feel left out or different at times.

27%

of children who spend over three hours a day on social media present symptoms of mental ill health. (EPI Social and mental health, 2017)

Contact us

Tel: 0208 203 1781

Email: support@2simple.com

Credit and ownership

While online copyright issues will not be of interest to young children, you can help them begin to understand the importance of credit and ownership by using physical examples from the real world. Children should learn that counterfeit or replica products may be unsafe, may damage a brand's reputation and aren't fair on the original designers. Use this analogy to help children understand the importance of crediting and recognising the work of others on the internet.

AGES 5 TO 7

Getting your children into the habit of putting their names on their own work and respecting things that belong to other people will help them to develop an understanding of ownership.

If your children do internet research for homework, get them into the routine of naming the sources for the work and any copied images.

Did You Know?

40%

of children have felt embarrassed about an image that their parents have posted online. (Opinion Leader, 2016)

Despite a minimum age of 13,

52%

of 8-12s have used Instagram, of whom 32% are regular users. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2018)

AGES 7 TO 11

Children should routinely credit the sources of the content that they prepare for homework, whether they have used online sources or books and including images and other media.

Children might be tempted to download pirated software or music. Explain to them that this is illegal and help them to see the other downsides: it puts them at risk of downloading viruses and malware and prevents the original author of the work from receiving credit.

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www.purplemash.com
Raising Standards Through Creativity

Contact us
Tel: 0208 203 1781
Email: support@2simple.com

3 STEPS

to supporting your child's online safety learning at home

Read this handy guide

1

You're already doing a great job!

2

Try online safety activites

Login to Purple Mash with your child and search 'Online Safety' to try fun activities at home. Home access is free if your child's school subscribes to Purple Mash.

Get a Free trial

3

Don't have Purple Mash yet? Get a free home access trial now at www.2simple.com.
A 1 year home access account is less than £5 a month and it Includes 1000s of educational games and activities to keep your children busy!

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Start my trial now

Jargon Buster

Adware
Application which displays adverts and can redirect searches.

App
Short for application

Block
Application which displays adverts and can redirect searches.

Blog/Blogging
Webpage containing users' opinions/experiences/ observations.

Bot
A program that does things without users' instructions. Many bots are malware.

CEOP
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command.

Chatroom
A place where online users can chat.

Chatroulette
Strangers interacting over text-chat and webcam.

Circumventor Sites
Parallel websites that allow children to bypass sites their adults have blocked.

Cookie
A small file which records a user's personal preferences.

Creeping
Someone who follows someone else's social network profile closely.

Cyberbullying
The use of electronic communication to bully.

Decoy App
These apps help children hide videos/images from their parents.

Digital Footprint
A person's trail of data on the internet that can last indefinitely.

Emoji
A digital image used to express an idea, action or emotion.

Fabotage
Changing a user's social media account content without permission.

Firewall
A system which protects a network from external threats.

Gamer
A person who plays mostly online video games.

Gamer Tag
An alter ego made from an alias, picture or avatar.

Griefer

Someone who deliberately harasses online gamers.

Grooming

Someone who gains a child's trust for sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Hacker

A person who gains unauthorised access to information.

Identity Theft

A crime which pieces together information for financial gain.

IM

Instant message sent between users via the internet.

In-app Purchasing

Purchases of services or products through apps which might be billed to phone accounts or nominated cards.

Incognito Browsing

Users can browse the web without their history being recorded on a device.

ISP

An internet service provider gives access to the internet.

Malware

Unauthorised software which damages, disrupts or accesses a device.

Netiquette

Netiquette is the code of good behaviour online.

Pharming

Directing users to bogus websites in order to extract information.

Phishing

Fake emails which entice a recipient to share confidential information.

Photosharing

Apps and sites allowing users to share photos; this can be very damaging for children.

PM

Private or personal message very popular on social media platforms.

Profile

A profile users have created for social media accounts.

Selfie

Self-portrait photo uploaded to social media.

Sexting

Send and receiving sexually explicit message, images or videos.

Social Media

The sharing of content and participation in social networking.

Spam

Messages sent to user for phishing, malware and advertising purposes.

Spyware

Unauthorised software covertly collecting information from a device.

Trojan

Malware disguised as legitimate software.

Troll

A user who posts inflammatory messages.

Video Hosting Sites

Online services which allow users to post and view clips.

Virus

A piece of code detrimental to systems and capable of copying itself.

2Simple has been making powerful and creative educational software for over 15 years, during which time we have won over 40 industry awards and become a trusted name in the sector. The company is based in the UK but 2Simple tools are used in classrooms all over the world.

One of our most popular products is Purple Mash, a safe online space where children can learn and create and teachers can easily set work and monitor progress, while parents can see children's creations and pupil/teacher feedback.

As part of our commitment to help build a better future for our young people, Parenting in the Digital World is freely accessible online at www.2simple.com

Contact us
Tel: 0208 203 1781
Email: support@2simple.com