

Keeping your child safe online - A checklist for parents and carers

As a parent you'll probably know how important the internet is to children and young people. They use it to learn, play, socialise and express themselves in all types of creative ways. This may be through sharing photos and videos, blogging, gaming, or even developing their own apps. It is a place of amazing opportunities.

The technology children use in their daily lives can seem daunting. You might worry about the risks they can face online, such as bullying, contact from strangers, as well as the possibility of access to inappropriate or illegal content. To help them stay safe, it's important that you understand how your child uses the internet.

By following this simple checklist, you can start to protect them and decrease the risks they face:



I have asked my child to show me sites they use – By doing so, your child is including you in their online life and social activity. Show an interest and take note of the names of their favourite sites. You can then re-visit these when you are alone. Take your time and explore the space, find out how to set the safety features and learn how to report any issues directly to the site.



I have asked my child to set their profile settings to private – Social networking sites, such as Facebook, are used by children to share information, photos and just about everything they do! Encourage your child to set their privacy settings to private. They need to think about the information they post online as it could be copied and pasted anywhere, without their permission. If it got into the wrong hands, somebody may wish to use it against them or worst of all try to locate them in the real world.



I have asked my child about their online friends – We know that people lie online about who they are and may create fake identities. It is very important children understand this. Whether they are visiting a social network or a gaming site, the safety messages are the same. Children and young people must never give out personal information and only be "friends" with people they know and trust in the real world.



I have set appropriate parental controls on my child's computer, mobile and games console – Filters on computers and mobiles can prevent your child from viewing inappropriate and possibly illegal content. You can activate and change levels depending on your child's age and abilities. You can also set time restrictions for using the internet or games. They can be free and easy to install. Call your service provider who will be happy to assist or visit CEOP's parents' site for further information. Explain to your child why you are setting parental controls when you talk to them about their internet use.



My child has agreed to tell me if they are worried about something online – Sometimes children get into situations online where they don't feel comfortable or see something they don't want to see. By opening up the communication channels and talking to your child about the internet, their favourite sites and the risks they may encounter, they are more likely to turn to you if they are concerned about something.



I know where to get help if I'm concerned about my child – The CEOP Safety Centre provides access to a range of services. If you are concerned that an adult has made inappropriate contact with your child you can report this directly to CEOP. You can also find help if you think your child is being bullied, or if you've come across something on the internet which you think may be illegal.

Visit the Safety Centre at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre or by clicking on this button:



For further help and guidance on all the information mentioned please visit
www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents



Risks children face online: Online grooming

What is online grooming?

Grooming is a process used to prepare a child for sexual abuse. An offender's aim when grooming will be to gain access to a child and build a relationship with that child. Grooming can take many different forms, from one off contact which may include sexual advances, to a series of events over time. It may start with an adult scanning websites to identify a vulnerable child or befriending a child, perhaps by pretending to have common hobbies or interests or using flattery to trick a child into trusting them.

Online it is easier for an offender to lie and gain one to one contact with a child, for example through a social networking or gaming site. They can share images or videos relating to their claimed common interests and build a 'relationship' away from any adult supervision.

Once a relationship is established an offender may then introduce sexual themes to the conversation, for example, asking the child about their sexual experiences, sharing pornography with them or asking them for sexual pictures of themselves. Different offenders will have different approaches so whereas this process may be very quick it can also take days, weeks or even months. Often an offender will attempt to get a child to meet them in the real world in order to abuse them. Increasingly some offenders are also persuading children to perform sexual acts on webcam.

Signs of grooming

Look out for an unhealthy or heightened level of internet usage. Has your child become more secretive about who they are talking to and where they conduct their online conversations?

To your knowledge has your child engaged in any sexual behaviour online or via text, chat or webcam? Have they got any new electronic devices or gifts that they may not have been able to obtain for themselves?

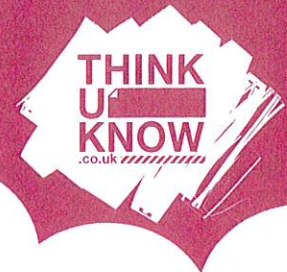
Talk to your child about meeting their online friend's offline. If they intend to meet any of these online friends you need to set clear boundaries, tell them why you are concerned for their safety and that they must take you or a trusted adult with them to the meeting.

What can parents and carers do to protect their child online?

Parents and carers need to be mindful that part of the fun of being online is communicating and often sites are designed for you to do so with people you don't know. It is important to talk to your child about who they are friends with and how to manage these online relationships.

Not sure where to start? Talk to your child about:

- * What sites they use
- * The friends they have and how they know them
- * How they communicate with these friends
- * The type of information they can share



Risks children face online: Online grooming

Top tips



Talk to your child about online grooming. Explain how easy it can be to lie online and the reasons why an adult may wish to contact them.

* **For primary age children** talk to them about the topic in the context of stranger danger. Strangers are people you or they don't know. In the online world there are strangers too and they must not talk privately with them or give out any personal information online.

* **For older children**, the conversation might be a little more difficult. They may have built quite an online network over the years, and might feel you're intruding into their private matters. Why not use one of the Thinkuknow resources to open a conversation. Our age appropriate education films are available through the parents and carers website (www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents) or CEOP YouTube channel (www.youtube.co.uk/ceop)



Talk about their online friends. Ask them to think carefully about who they chat and share information with. If they don't know them in the real world they need to delete or limit what they share with them, for example not sharing their photos, videos or their locations.



Let your child know that you are always there for support. Let them know that you understand how easy it can be to get into difficulties online. Get them to talk to you if anyone makes inappropriate/ sexual comments and ensure they know that, no matter what's happened, you are there to help.



Learn how to report any inappropriate contact made to your child online. This can be done via the ClickCEOP button at www.ceop.police.uk

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

CEOP is a police led, child protection agency which specialises in tackling sexual abuse on and offline. Through its education programme, Thinkuknow, CEOP offers a range of safety information for children, young people, practitioners and parents/carers. For more information visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

Reporting to CEOP

If someone has acted inappropriately towards your child, it may be sexual chat, being asked to do something that makes them feel uncomfortable or someone being insistent on meeting up, you must report it to ClickCEOP at www.ceop.police.uk.



Ask your child to tell you what they like most about the internet and why
e.g. sites they visit, ways to communicate, games they play etc.

What does a better internet mean to them?
Is it safer, more fun, kinder, more to do, easier to use?

Ask your child what they would like others to do to improve the internet and make it a better place.

What could your child do to make the internet a better place?
Do they have creative skills or ideas to create a new website or app?

Encourage your child to do good digital deeds to help others. Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend that would benefit from their help and support.

Ask your child if they know where to go for help, where to find safety advice and privacy settings, and how to report or block on the services they use.

Ask your child what they would do if they saw hateful content online. Who could they turn to for help?

Think about how you each use the internet. What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there any activities you could enjoy as a family?

Ask your child to tell you how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you to deal with online issues? Where did they learn them?

For more information and advice, visit www.saferinternet.org.uk

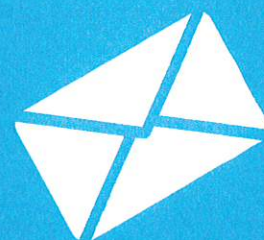
Sexting: how to keep your child stay safe

As a parent, it's important to understand the risks of **sexting** so that you can talk to your child about how to stay safe and what to do if they ever feel scared or uncomfortable.

- ✓ Acknowledge that your child probably won't want to talk to you about **sexting**.
- ✓ Think about the best way of starting the conversation with your child, based on your child's age, your parenting style, and using some of the tips on **nspcc.org.uk/sexting**.
- ✓ Reassure your child that you will be supportive and understanding should they ever want to talk about sexting.
- ✓ Explain that your child's body is private and that being asked to 'sext' is inappropriate (sending an image of their body).
- ✓ Remind them that even if they trust the person who is asking them for a picture, the nature of their relationship could change in the future.
- ✓ Remind them that they need to think carefully about what they post and share, as it's very difficult to retrieve an image once it's out there.
- ✓ Mention that ChildLine have an app called Zipit, which can help diffuse situations where your child is asked to 'sext'. To find out more about the app visit **www.childline.org.uk/zipit**

For more help and advice visit
www.nspcc.org.uk/sexting

or contact the NSPCC **helpline** on
0808 800 5000 to discuss any concerns



XOXO

NSPCC 
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

Supporting young people online

Information and advice
for parents
and carers



The internet – an inspiring and positive place

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. We have grouped potential online risks into these 4 categories.



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.



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, this can also be reported online and offline. 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.

There are real advantages in maintaining an open dialogue with your child about their internet use. Not sure where to begin? These conversation starter suggestions can help.

1 Ask your children to tell you about the websites and apps they like to use and what they enjoy doing online.

2 Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?

3 Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use.

4 Encourage them to help someone! Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support.

5 Think about how you each use the internet. What more could you do to use the internet together? Are there activities that you could enjoy as a family?

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 your children's boundaries, and your expectations, when 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 facilities.
- ☐ Consider using filtering software to block unwanted content. In addition to filtering, remember that discussion with your child, and involvement in their internet use, are both effective ways to educate them about the internet.
- ☐ 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. Be able to recommend legal services.
- ☐ 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 school, service provider, or the police if the law has been broken.
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with the age ratings for games and apps which can help to indicate the level and suitability of the content. Also see if online reviews are available from other parents as these may be helpful.
- ☐ 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 password on devices to help protect personal information.

Sign up to our Childnet newsletter at www.childnet.com.

Help make sure that your children know how to stay safe online, by using our SMART Rules for primary aged children, or 5 Tips for Teens.

5 SMART Rules for primary aged children:

S Safe: Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

M Meet: Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present. Remember online friends are still strangers even if you have been talking to them for a long time.

A Accepting: Accepting emails, messages, or opening files, images or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R Reliable: Someone online might lie about who they are and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information by looking at other websites, in books, or with someone who knows. If you like chatting online it's best to only chat to your real world friends and family.

T Tell: Tell a parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone, or something, makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.

5 Tips for Teens:

1 Protect your online reputation: use the tools provided by online services to manage your digital footprints and 'think before you post.' Content posted online can last forever and could be shared publicly by anyone.

2 Know where to find help: understand how to report to service providers and use blocking and deleting tools. If something happens that upsets you online, it's never too late to tell someone.

3 Don't give in to pressure: if you lose your inhibitions you've lost control; once you've pressed send you can't take it back.

4 Respect the law: use reliable services and know how to legally access the music, film and TV you want.

5 Acknowledge your sources: use trustworthy content and remember to give credit when using other people's work/ideas.

Further advice and resources:

www.childnet.com
www.saferinternet.org.uk



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Parent's Fact Sheet

Know what your children are doing online and who they are talking to. Ask them to teach you to use any applications you have never used. Keeping the computer in a family room means that you can share your child's online experience – and that they are less likely to act inappropriately (i.e. via webcam).

Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends — personal information includes their messenger ID, email address, mobile number and any pictures of themselves, their family or friends. If your child publishes a picture or video online, anyone can change it or share it. Remind them that anyone may be looking at their images and one day a future employer could!

If your child receives spam/junk email & texts, remind them never to believe them, reply to them or use them. It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain — it could be a virus, or worse — an inappropriate image or film. Help your child to understand that some people lie online and therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust.

Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

Teach young people how to block someone online and how to report them if they feel uncomfortable.

Websites:

www.ceop.gov.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.getnetwise.org

Signs of CSE

There are a number of signs that **could** (not always present but common) indicate a child or young person is being groomed for sexual exploitation. These include:

- Going missing frequently or regularly returning home late.
- Regularly missing school or college.
- Having unexplained gifts or unaffordable new items in their possession.
- Reducing their contact with family or friends.
- Having older boyfriends and girlfriends or friendship groups.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Mood swings and changes in emotional wellbeing or secrecy.
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse.
- Self harming.

Protecting children from exploitation

Young people are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation because they want to experiment, take risks, and push boundaries. However, there are a number of steps that you can take to protect your child:

- Talk to your child about healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Discuss internet safety with your child and take action to reduce any risks when they are online.
- Be aware of the warning signs of CSE.
- If you suspect a case of CSE is happening, report it.

If someone is in immediate danger, always ring the police on 999

In non-emergency situations you can report to 101.

It's Not Okay Week of Action Parent Pack
June 2018

Thinkuknow - <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

This website is part of the National Crime Agency's CEOP Command. They provide a lot of information and guidance to support parents and carers to understand child sexual exploitation, give them tools to have conversations with their children, support to take action about concerns and getting support. Best of all, it's free!

NSPCC Net Aware - <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

This is a really helpful guide to what apps, websites and social media's children are using. Parents review apps themselves and add their suggested age rating and this is particularly useful for parents/carers when their children are asking to join particular apps and social media's.

Net Aware also offer a free newsletter to help parents/carers keep up to date with the ever developing digital world. You can sign up for this on the Net Aware website.

PACE (Parents against child sexual exploitation) - <https://paceuk.info/>

PACE are a charity that is run by parents/carers of sexually exploited children for parents/carers of sexually exploited children. They offer:

- One to one telephone advice and support
- Facilitate peer support with other parents
- Advice on parental rights
- Advice and support when pursuing disruption and prosecution of offenders
- Befriending scheme
- Secure parent forum
- Parent networking