

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Keeping up to date with children's use of technology is challenging for many adults. It can be hard to supervise what young people are viewing and creating online, who they are chatting to and texting, and what they are downloading.

Many children may have better technical skills than you, however they still need advice and protection when using internet and mobile technologies.

There are a few simple steps which parents can take to help their children use the internet safely:

- # Get to know your child's online habits. They will look to explore the internet as much as they do the real world. Knowing the sites they go to, the people they meet there and what they do will help to keep children safe.
- # Stay alert to any sudden changes in mood or appearance or to increase in secretiveness.
- # Keep lines of communication open – tell your child they can always talk to you.
- # Spend time surfing the internet yourself. The more you know, the better able you are to help your child navigate around it.
- # Install internet filtering software – these can help to block inappropriate material.
- # Help your child to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends.
- # Explain to your child that personal details includes not only names and addresses, but also details of sports clubs, arrangements for meeting up with friends and photos.
- # Make your child aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures on their profile. Once published, anyone can change and share this information.
- # It is not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. It could be a virus or an inappropriate message/image.
- # Help your child to understand that some people lie online. They should never meet up with strangers without being supervised.

Further advice and resources:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk: the main Government website with advice to parents

www.ceop.gov.uk: Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

<http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/> Reviews of internet blocking software.

www.chatdanger.com Site about the potential dangers on interactive services online

www.childnet-int.org A non profit organisation working to make the internet great and safe

www.bullying.co.uk A charity covering all aspects of bullying, both on and off line.

www.getnetwise.org Site on internet safety for children as well as spam, security and privacy

www.iwf.org.uk: Internet Watch Foundation. Hotline for reporting illegal online content