

How to keep your kids safe online:

During these difficult times BT are helping to keep the nation connected with a range of Top Tips on Tech. The following are a range of suggestions that can help you keep children safe online.



Tip 1: Understanding the risks

The internet is a great place for kids to learn, play and socialise, but there are risks too. There is content online that might scare or upset them, they could share personal information when it's not appropriate, or even get involved in bullying or hurtful behaviour. And too much screen time can sometimes affect their behaviour, sleeping cycles and cause increased anxiety.

Additionally there are harmful things anyone could be exposed to online, such as malicious websites, viruses, or having your accounts hacked. So please be vigilant.

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Tip 2: Set parental controls



Parental controls help you to block or filter upsetting or inappropriate content. Set parental controls on your home broadband through your online account. Use safe search engines like [Swiggle](#), or switch on the safe search settings on Google and YouTube.

[YouTube Kids](#) is an app that has been created by YouTube, perfect to let your little ones explore fun and educational videos in a safe environment.

If your children have tablets or smartphones [internetmatters.org](#) have provided easy to follow guides for how to set your controls. They also provide a guide to most broadband and mobile providers.

- [Broadband and mobile parental controls](#)
- [Smartphone parental controls](#)



Tip 3: App safety

Talk to your kids about the apps they're using and who they're sharing with online. Make sure they don't reveal any personal details and that they think before they share anything. For example, they should ask themselves questions like these: Is it appropriate? Is it revealing too much about their personal lives? Is it hurtful to others?

Live streaming is becoming more and more popular, make sure your kids never live stream one on one with a stranger.

Finally please remember many apps have a feature called geolocation, which can let other people know where you are. Make sure it's turned off in the settings.

- [Apps guide](#)
- [Live streaming tips](#)

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Tip 4: Privacy settings on social media



Most social media platforms require users to be at least 13. If your children do have a profile, make sure they set it to private in settings. Make sure their tagging settings only share images with friends and remind them that they shouldn't accept friend requests from people they don't know.

[Social media privacy guides](#) •



Tip 5: Being secure online

Anti-virus software can really help protect your family's computers, laptops, tablets and mobiles from viruses. Make sure the anti-virus software you download includes features that can stop your children from visiting malicious websites too.

You should also help your children create strong passwords when setting up accounts so that they are not vulnerable to hackers.

For example:

- Pick three random words
- Add numbers & symbols
- And use a mix of capital & lower case letters

You can get more advice on creating strong passwords at [Cyber Aware](#).

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Tip 6: Keep talking



It's important to talk to your children about what they do online and how they behave.

Having regular conversations about what your children are seeing and doing online will help you spot if there are any issues.

Getting the right screen time balance is very important for our children. As parents, we should speak to our children about this and agree some boundaries. You can find out more information on how to get the best out of their screen time and adopt a healthy digital diet [here](#).



Tip 7: Helping younger kids understand

For younger kids, it can be hard to understand why they need to take care when they are online. So one way to help them understand is comparing internet rules to your house rules:

Rule 1: Young children know they're not allowed in the house alone without an adult. Help them understand they can't go online without an adult present.

Rule 2: You wouldn't let your children out of the house without knowing who they were meeting. If someone unknown contacts them online, ask them not to reply, but inform an adult.

Rule 3: You wouldn't put family photos on the outside of the house. Make sure the kids know to ask an adult before sharing photos online.

Rule 4: If someone upsets them in any way, they know to come home and tell an adult. Tell an adult if they receive messages that hurt their feelings or makes them feel uncomfortable.

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Tip 8: Know where to find out more



There are some really great resources to help you stay safe online, including a new one set up by the government specifically to help during this crisis:

[Internet Matters](#) •

[NSPCC](#) •

[Government Guidance](#) •

Or if you're concerned about online grooming or explicit behaviour online, contact the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command to make a report.

[CEOP Police](#) •

Please share these tips with other parents, the more we all know, the safer our children are.

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