

Set Up Safe Checklist



Set your child up for online safety with these simple tasks

Manage broadband & mobile networks



At home, access your broadband network and set applicable controls.



On the go, set up controls on the relevant mobile network.

See [step-by-step guides](#) to help

Prepare their device



Explore the [device controls and settings](#) to set limits on inappropriate content, screen time, spending and more.



Download and install the apps and games you're okay with your child using.



Set up controls in these apps and games to help keep your child safe while they play, browse or chat.



Install or set up additional [parental control apps](#) for further protection.

Explore [step-by-step guides for social media and video gaming](#)

Talk & learn regularly

Together, learn about online safety issues that might impact your child.

Together, explore privacy and safety settings on their favourite platforms.

Ask them to teach you about their favourite online platforms to create an open environment for conversation.

Keep these conversations going for continuous support.



Visit internetmatters.org for more advice

[InternetMatters](https://www.facebook.com/InternetMatters)
 [@im_org](https://twitter.com/im_org)

[@internetmatters](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029va20111111111111111111)
 [Internet Matters Ltd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/internet-matters-ltd)

[@internetmattersorg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC11111111111111111111)
 [@InternetMatters_org](https://www.instagram.com/InternetMatters_org)

Digital safety at a glance

internet matters.org

Guidance for parents of 5-7-year-olds

Use this quick tips guide to stay on top of your child's online safety needs.

Tech use, issues & tips

Learn about common experiences at this age and what you can do to help keep your child safe online as they grow.



93%

watch videos



59%

send messages or make video/voice calls



89%¹

use YouTube



Too much screen time

is what children at this age report experiencing most and **69% of parents worry about it.**

Set time limits for devices and help kids experience a range of activities where they create and learn to support their wellbeing.

Get more support to handle screen time ▶



In-game and in-app spending

is one of the most common online harms at this age. **58% of parents say they worry about this.**

Review purchase settings and parental controls in apps, games and online stores to set limits, then talk about why they're important.

Learn about money management online ▶



Online bullying²

from people children know is one of the most common harms among this age group, and **63% of parents worry about this.**

Online bullying is difficult to escape or ignore. So, talk about what it looks like so kids know when and how to get support.

See how to talk about cyberbullying ▶

1 - Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2023
2 - Internet Matters survey tracker

Practical tips to keep 5-7s safe online

Set parental controls on popular apps



1. Set up YouTube Kids for under-13s
2. Use timers to manage screen time
3. Turn off Watch History to limit suggested videos

[Go to YouTube parental controls guide](#)



1. Use the in-built parental controls with a PIN
2. Customise who your child can talk to
3. Enable Account Restrictions for easy set up

[Go to Roblox parental controls guide](#)



1. Create a child's profile
2. Set a parental controls PIN
3. Customise maturity level of content your child can watch

[Go to Disney+ parental controls guide](#)

Are they talking to others online?



[Learn about social media for under-13s](#)

[Talk about internet manners](#)



Get personalised advice straight to your inbox

Want advice to stay on top of your kids' digital lives? Together, we've got this with our free personalised family digital toolkit. By completing the form, you'll get:

- Age-specific checklists and guides
- Safety information on the latest apps and platforms
- Resources to tackle online concerns by age
- Interactive tools to encourage discussion on key topics

Scan the QR code or go to internetmatters.org/toolkit



Make online safety a part of their everyday

Conversations to have

Talk about:

- What they're watching; what do they like about it?
- What apps/games they like; what would they like to try?
- How being online makes them feel; what signs tell them they need a break?

[See more conversation starters](#)

Tools to explore together

Build digital skills and play together with:

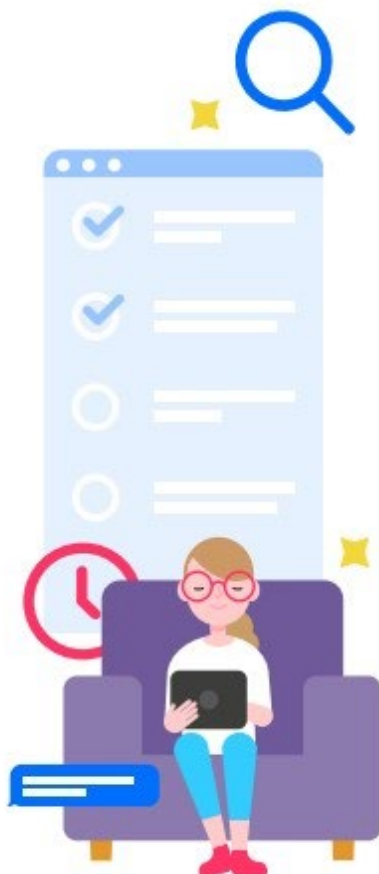
- The Online Together Project: An interactive quiz with discussion points to challenge stereotypes and hate online.
- Find the Fake: A series of quizzes to help teach children how to recognise and tackle misinformation online.

[Explore age-specific guides](#)



Online safety tips for parents of primary school children 6-10 Year Olds

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matters.org



Checklist:

Agree on boundaries

Be clear about what your child can and can't do online – where and when they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. Agree with your child when they can have a mobile phone or tablet.

When you do give them their first device make sure that it is set up appropriately for them with the right parental controls in place. It's a good idea to **introduce tech-free meal times** and encourage them to **keep phones out of the bedroom at night** to help them build a healthy screen time balance.

Put yourself in control

Set parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. Set up a user account for your child on the main device they use and make sure other accounts in the household are password-protected so that younger children can't access them by accident.

Explore together

The best way to support your child online is to **talk to them about what they do online** and what sites and apps they like to use. Be inquisitive and ask them to show you their favourites to check they're suitable.

Search safely

If you let your child search independently, **make sure safe search is activated on Google and other search engines**, as well as restricted mode on YouTube. You can set your default search to one designed specifically for children, such as Swiggle, and can save time by adding these to your Favourites.

Check if it's suitable

The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child. **For example, the minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites**, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok.

Make use of platforms and services designed with children in mind like CBBC, YouTube Kids, Sky Kids, BBC iPlayerKids. Although sites aimed at under-10s like Spotlite (Formerly Kudos) also have social networking elements. See other similar social networking sites built for kids in our ['Social networks made for kids' guide](#).

Stay involved

Encourage them to use their tech devices in a shared space like the lounge or kitchen so you can keep an eye on how they're using the internet and also share in their enjoyment.

Talk to siblings

It's a good idea to talk to any older children about what they're doing online and what they show to younger children. **Encourage them to be responsible and help keep their younger siblings safe.**



Know this stuff matters, but don't know where to turn?

Internet Matters is a free online resource for every parent in the UK. We'll show you the best ways to protect your children online – with information, advice and support on all the big online safety issues.

44%

of 5-10 year olds
have their own
mobile phone*

81%

use a tablet
to go online*



Learn about it:

Teach your child some simple rules

- Make sure your child knows **not to share personal information** like their phone number or email address online.
- Encourage them to **only talk to real-life friends or family** if they are on sites with a social media or chat element like Roblox.
- **Use privacy settings** wherever they exist to keep their information private - help your child to set these up. Remember that the default on many sites is public.
- **Be a good online friend** and don't say nasty things even if it's just a joke.
- Direct them to use **secure and legal sites to download** music and games to avoid experiencing the risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites. Visit our ['Dangers of digital piracy' advice hub](#) for more advice.
- Advise them to **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything and ask if they aren't sure. You can set up their phone/tablet so you need to grant permission before they are able to download an app or game.
- **Encourage them to use Public Friendly WiFi** when they're out and about to filter inappropriate content but also use the parental control tools on the device just in case they do connect to an unfiltered WiFi - the most likely place for this to happen could be at a friend's house.
- **Help them to better understand the different online platforms they use** and judge the quality and reliability of online resources. Take a look at our [fake news and misinformation advice hub](#) to help children spot, and stop the spread of fake news online.



Talk about it:

Tips for a meaningful conversation

- Start conversations when your children won't be embarrassed, for example in the car going home from school. **Try to de-personalise it by asking their opinion on a current news story** that relates to an online issue.
- **Be proactive - don't wait until something has already gone wrong** - discuss issues ahead of time - knowing what children of a similar age are doing will help you know more about the environment that your child is living in.
- **Ask them for advice on how to do something online** and use this as a conversation starter.
- Make sure they know they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online - **listen to them when they do and try not to overreact** - the important thing is that they have come and told you!
- **Be sensitive and praise them** when they share their online experiences with you.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, **stay calm and listen without judging them.**
- **Talk about online grooming as you would stranger danger** and explain that people they meet online might not be who they say they are.
- Ask them about things online which **might make them (or others) uncomfortable.**



Deal with it

You can find out where to get help and advice on the [Report issue](#) resource page of [internetmatters.org](#), where we include information on how to report problems – and which relevant organisations and agencies to turn to.

On this page, we also provide information on how to deal with any specific issues you may encounter with your child; such as finding inappropriate content and cyberbullying.

Stay safe at secondary school

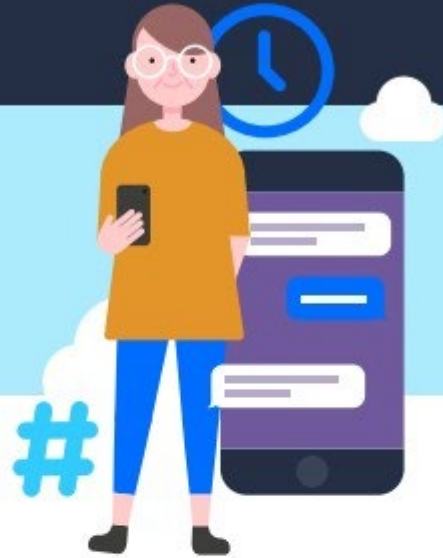
Exposure to some of these issues increases when children move up to secondary school so make sure your child is prepared – find out more with our pre-teens age guide at internetmatters.org/advice/11-13

Online safety tips for parents of 11-13 Year Olds

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60% of children age 8-11 have their own social media profile

*Source: Ofcom Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022



Checklist:

Have a conversation

The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to **ask them to tell you about what they do and what sites they like to visit**. Discuss with them what they might come across. There are always stories in the press which will help to start a conversation. [See our conversation starter guide](#) for advice to help children open up about their digital lives.

Agree on boundaries

Have a [family agreement](#) about where and when they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. **It's a good idea to introduce tech-free meals times and encourage them to keep phones out of the bedroom at night** to help them build a healthy balance with screen time.

Put yourself in control:

Make use of parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices that your child uses. You can [visit our parental control how-to guides](#) to learn how to set these up or visit your broadband or mobile network's provider's website. You can also set up safe search in Google by going to the Google Safety Centre.



If you are giving a child their first device, you can set all this up together before they start using it so they can see how they'll be protected. It can also be an opportunity to have a conversation about online safety.

Remember, although these tools can create a safety net to protect children online, they are not 100% foolproof so **it's important to continue having regular conversations with children** about their online use to equip them with coping strategies to deal with online risks.

Check if it's suitable

The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks **are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child**. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. [Visit our guide to check the minimum age of popular apps.](#)

Get them clued up about social networking

Talk to children about the benefits and risks of social networking before they join any sites. Let them know that anything they upload, email, or message could stay around forever online. Help them to set their profile up so that they are in control of who can comment, message them etc. Get tips and insight from [our social media guide](#). If you have a child with SEND, [please visit our Connecting Safely Online hub for tailored advice.](#)

Help them to be critical of things they see online and judge the quality and reliability of online sources.



Learn about it:

Teach your child some simple rules

- Make sure your child knows **not to share personal information like their phone number or email address online** and if they need to provide this or similar information to sign up for a service tell them to check with you first.
- Encourage them to only talk to **real-life friends or family** on social media sites and in chatrooms.
- **Show them how to use privacy settings** wherever they exist to keep their information private - remember that the default on many sites is set to public. [Visit our social media privacy guides for support.](#)
- As children may go online to widen their group of friends, **set some boundaries when it comes to new friends online.**
- **Advise them not to arrange to meet with people in real life** that they've only talked with online without talking to you about it and getting your support.
- **Advise them to use secure and legal sites to download music and games** to avoid experiencing the risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites. [Visit our 'Dangers of digital piracy' advice hub more advice.](#)
- **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything.
- Use Public Friendly WiFi when they're out and about to filter inappropriate content. **Also, encourage them to use the parental control tools on their device** just in case they do connect to an unfiltered WiFi - such as at a friend's house.
- Make sure they know **not to post things online that they wouldn't want you to see**



Talk about it:

Tips for a meaningful conversation

- **Ask them for advice on how to do something online** and use this as a conversation starter.
- **Make sure they know they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online** and remember to listen and not overreact.
- **Be sensitive and praise them** when they share their online experiences with you
- Make sure they know **how to block abusive comments and report content** that worries them.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, **stay calm and listen without judging them**
- **Tackle peer pressure** by explaining that if they are talked into bullying someone online or sending inappropriate images it may get reported to their school or even the police. Read this guide – So you got naked online– aimed at kids to get insight on [how to deal with sexting incidence](#).
- Teach them to treat others as they'd like to be treated online and set a good example with your own internet use. [Use the Stop, Speak, Support code](#) to encourage them to call out cyberbullying when they see it.



Deal with it

You can find out where to get help and advice on the [Report issue page of internetmatters.org](#), where we include information on how to report problems - and which relevant organisations and agencies to turn to.

On this page, we also provide information on how to deal with any specific issues you may encounter with your child; such as [cyberbullying](#), finding [inappropriate content](#), your child's [online reputation](#), [online pornography](#) and [child grooming](#).

Online safety tips for parents of teenagers 14+ Year Olds

internet matters.org

99% of 12-17-year-olds have their own mobile phone
98% use video-sharing platforms
92% have their own social media profiles
75% play games online

*Source: Ofcom Children and parents: media use and attitudes 2022 report.



Checklist:

Keep talking

Stay interested in what they're doing online and discuss what they might have come across. **Don't be afraid to tackle difficult subjects like cyberbullying, and sexting and pornography.** Help them to be critical of things they see online and judge the quality and reliability of online sources. Acknowledge that this is difficult considering how content can be manipulated online to persuade even the most savvy people. Talk together about how to manage some of these challenges and why it is important.

Manage their online reputation

Let them know that anything they upload, email or message could stay online forever. **Remind them that they should only post things online that they wouldn't mind you, their teacher or a future employer seeing.** There are lots of stories in the media that highlight the importance of online reputation and clearly demonstrate how things that happened years ago can resurface in the future. See our [online reputation advice hub](#) to get tips to support young people on this issue

Adjust controls

Adjust the [parental controls](#) on your broadband and internet-enabled devices, depending on your child's age. Your broadband provider can tell you how. Find out how to set up safe search in Google by going to the [Google Safety Centre](#). Remember that at this age they are likely to have friends with unfiltered devices and whilst parental controls and filtering is important this needs to be done alongside dialogue and discussion.

Privacy matters

Make sure they set high privacy settings on social networks. Encourage them to regularly change their passwords and never to share or put online any of their personal details like phone number, address or their school. [Use our social media privacy how-to guides](#) to support them.

Stay safe on the move

Make sure safety and privacy settings are activated on their mobile devices and they aren't sharing private information. Be aware that using public WiFi might not filter inappropriate content, so look for friendly WiFi symbols when you're out and about. **Also, encourage them to use the parental control tools on their device** just in case they do connect to an unfiltered WiFi - such as at a friend's house.



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Learn about it:

Teach your child some simple rules

- Make sure your child knows how to **block abusive comments and report content** that worries them.
- Teach them to **respect others online and think about comments before they post them** and discuss how easily comments made online can be misinterpreted.
- Don't arrange to meet people in real life that they've only talked to online and **remind them that some people may not be who they say they are.**
- **Advise them to use secure and legal sites to download music and games** to avoid experiencing the risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites. [Visit our 'Dangers of digital piracy' advice hub](#) more advice.
- **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything.
- When using the internet for homework, **make sure they use information appropriately** and explain things in their own words rather than copying.



Talk about it:

Tips for a meaningful conversation

- Make sure your child knows **they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online** and make sure that you listen and don't overreact - the important thing is that they have come to you for help and support.
- **Tell them you trust them to do the right thing** rather than over monitoring their internet use.
- If your child comes to you with an issue, **stay calm and listen without judging them** and don't threaten to take away their devices.
- **Tackle peer pressure** by explaining that if they're talked into bullying someone online or sending inappropriate images it may get reported to their school or even the police. [Learn how online actions can affect young people's reputation with our advice hub](#)
- **Talk to them about how much time they spend online** and make sure this is balanced against other activities. [See our 'Screen time guide for 14+' for age-specific advice.](#)
- Discuss how they can **report any harmful or inappropriate content or behaviour** that they encounter online - empower them to take control themselves.



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Learn more about apps

It can be difficult to stay on top of what apps your child is using and who they are talking to online - [find out more about the latest apps at internetmatters.org/apps](#).