

E-safety for Parents

Based on UKCCIS Universal Guidelines
Gwenllian South
ICT Adviser, Essex County Council

Introduction

For young people the internet, and the increasing number of digital devices they use to connect to it, is an **integral** part of their everyday lives. Whether they use it to express themselves or to stay in touch with friends, for entertainment or education, the internet can provide **tremendous benefits** and most use it safely. But while digital technology provides a wealth of opportunities, we are all aware that there are **online risks** and sometimes these risks can lead to harm. At the same time, while young people's **'offline' and 'online' worlds are often merging**, the behaviours and safeguards of the 'real' world are not always applied in a 'virtual' world where friends can be added at the click of button and information shared in an instant.

Research

EU Kids Online is a research project which surveyed 25,000 children and their parents across Europe to understand the true online risks and opportunities. It defines the risks young people might be exposed to online under three key headings:

- **Content:** harm that can arise from exposure to age inappropriate, distasteful or illegal content
- **Conduct:** harm that can arise from how young people behave online
- **Contact:** harm that can arise from interactions with other individuals online

Research

A fourth category **'Commerce'** is also sometimes added. This reflects the concerns that some have about the exposure of children to messages of a sexual and commercial nature.

Although many children are taught some aspects of internet safety in school, you too can play an important part in helping to safeguard young people online.

Did you know?

- 48% of children in the UK say there are things on the internet that bother children their own age and 13% of 9-16 year olds say that they've been bothered/upset by something online - **EU Kids Online**
- Around 10% of 8-15 year olds who use the internet at home report seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed online - **Ofcom**

Did you know?

- 12% of children have experienced data misuse such as identity theft or somebody using their personal information in a way they didn't like - **EU Kids Online II**
- 13% of 12-15 year olds are happy to share their email with 'friends of friends' or 'anyone'. Children are happier to share photos and feelings online compared to sharing personal contact details - **Ofcom**
- Around 25% of 8-15 year olds with a social networking profile have it set to open, either to anyone or to friends and their friends - **Ofcom**
- 41% of 12-15 year olds have a smartphone and around half use it for social networking on a weekly basis - **Ofcom**

Did you know?

- 29% of children in the UK have had online contact with people they had not met before - **EU Kids Online II**
- 12% of 8-11 year olds and 24% of 12-15 year olds say that they use social networking sites to communicate with people not directly known to them – **Ofcom**
- The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) receives more than 600 reports of grooming a month

Did you know?

- 11% of children in the UK have encountered sexual images online and 12% of 11-16 year olds have received them - **EU Kids Online II**
- 21% of UK children say they have been bullied and 8% say this occurred on the internet - **EU Kids Online II**
- 19% of UK 11-16 year old internet users have seen one or more type of potentially harmful user-generated content, rising to 32% of 14-16 year old girls - **EU Kids Online II**
- 45% of 12-15 year olds claim to understand how search engines operate but one third say they think all search engine information is truthful - **Ofcom**

What should I be aware of?

- **Chatting:** anything which allows users to communicate in conversation with one another – this could be in the form of text-based messaging, voice-based or video-based communication such as via webcam and can either be instant (such as text messaging) or delayed (such as e-mail or voicemail)

What should I be aware of?

- **Sharing:** anything which allows users to upload data or information (such as pictures, videos, text, location data) that can then be accessed by other users or sent to other users. This includes sharing within a controlled environment (e.g. sharing only with 'friends')

What should I be aware of?

- **Gaming:** anything which allows users to play games in an online environment against other users. This includes simultaneous play (e.g. an 'online world'), 'turn by turn' play (e.g. chess on a mobile phone app) and play that contributes to a published leaderboard (e.g. console online ranking systems)

What should I be aware of?

- **Content providing:** anything which allows users to search or browse for content that can either be viewed online or downloaded to their device. This includes information, all types of media and file formats including applications

What should I be aware of?

- **Networking (closely relates to 'sharing')**: anything which enables users to 'friend' other users, thereby allowing friends to see information about them. This may include the ability to publish content out to a broader audience of users (including friending and building communities)

What should I be aware of?

- **Shopping and commerce**: anything which allows users to effect transactions on their site, either for physical goods, virtual goods or services. This includes transactions where users pay using 'points' rather than money or where users agree to make a purchase at a later date rather than transact immediately (e.g. click and reserve)

What should I be doing?

- **Talking** to your child about who they're talking to online and encourage them to think before talking to people they don't know in person. Encourage them also to think about what sort of **information** they might be sharing.
- Trying to understand and guide your child's online behaviour - negotiating and establishing **boundaries** and discussing sensitively the issues around concepts such as 'friendship'.
- **Familiarising** yourself with any programmes or websites your child uses.

What should I be doing?

- Asking your child if they know how to **block** or **report** someone who they don't want to talk to. If they don't, helping them to learn how to use the blocking feature.
- Using **parental control software** provided by your internet service provider, mobile phone network, online content provider or games console and considering using filtering options, monitoring and setting time limits for access to chat...**but don't forget these don't block or flag up everything!**

What else?

- If you discover misconduct between your child and someone online **stay calm**, investigate the facts and seek expert help if needed.
- If appropriate, as part of a wider discussion about sex and relationships, cover how people may use the internet to explore their sexuality, their ability to exploit and even harm others, etc.

Who can help?

- The school 'Designated Person' and/or e-Safety Officer
- Childline (0800 1111)
- [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#)
- Thinkuknow.co.uk
- CyberMentors.org.uk
- [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- GetSafeOnline.org