

KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE



RISKS POSED BY NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Instant message services – quicker than email, these allow users to have 'real time' conversations, and offensive messages or content can be sent in this way

Webcams – usually used to view each other when chatting online, children can also be sent abusive images or encouraged to act in an inappropriate way while being filmed

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) – abusers can use the various forms of online software used by schools to enable staff and pupils to interact with each other to send offensive images and messages

Video hosting sites (like YouTube) – children may find themselves the subject of films being shown or be accidentally exposed to pornographic images

Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds – chatting is possible within many games, and name calling, abusive remarks and picking on particular players can occur

Chat rooms, blogs and forums – although many of these are moderated, people involved in discussions can be sent abusive responses

Text messaging – abusive and threatening texts can be sent to mobile phones

Abusive or prank phone calls – these can be made to your child's mobile phone

Picture and video clip messaging – offensive images can be sent to mobile phones

E-mail – new addresses can be set up in minutes and used to send offensive messages and images

Social networking and personal websites (like Facebook or MySpace) – offensive or humiliating messages and images can be posted on these sites

Identity theft – in many cyber environments fake profiles can be set up pretending to be someone else with the aim of bullying others

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

1. encourage them to talk to you or another adult about anything that's upsetting them
2. watch out for them seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
3. try to understand the ways in which they are using their digital technologies

4. ask them to think about how their actions affect other users
5. suggest that they only use moderated chat rooms
6. encourage them to show you any abusive or offensive emails or messages they've received and keep a record of them
7. help them report any abuse to their school, the internet service provider, the website manager/moderator, the mobile phone company or the police
8. tell them never to respond to any abusive messages or calls – this is frequently what the abuser wants
9. discuss keeping their passwords safe and avoiding giving their name, email address or mobile phone number to people outside their circle of friends and family
10. change email address or telephone number if the abuse continues
11. turn on in-built internet safety features and install computer software to ensure that you only receive emails from people you have chosen and to block unwanted images
12. tell them about places where they can go for help and support like CyberMentors, ChildLine and Childnet International
13. explain to them what information about them is personal: i.e. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club, arrangements for meeting up with friends and any pictures or videos of themselves, their family or friends. Small pieces of information can easily be pieced together to form a comprehensive insight in to their lives and daily activities
14. make them aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles. Inform them that once published online, anyone can change or share these images of them
15. advise them not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see
16. if they receive spam or junk email and texts, remind them never to believe their contents, reply to them or use them
17. it's not a good idea 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
18. help them to understand that some people lie online and that therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust

CEOP is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. Visit their dedicated website for parents and carers at:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents