

e-safety briefing for parents

This e-safety briefing aims to help you keep your children safe.

1. **What are your children taught about e-safety?** Ask your school. From September 2014 e-safety is a required part of the National Curriculum across all key stages, but schools have been teaching and helping children about e-safety in one form or another for years. By getting a better understanding of what the school is doing, you can help to reinforce those messages and copy safe-use practices at home.
2. **What devices are your children using?** Are there parental settings on those devices that can restrict some of the adult content? For example, Playstation and Xbox consoles allow parents to restrict the games that children can download or play, based on their age. These age restrictions are known as PEGI ratings.
3. **Does your internet service provider give you access to parental filter controls?** Most internet providers do. These allow you to choose which categories of websites your children are accessing. The 'Big 4' providers (BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media) give parents access to filters at the broadband router. This means that you can go online to your broadband account, activate the software, and change the settings to levels appropriate for your children. By doing this you are restricting access to certain categories of website for any device that uses your home broadband.
4. **Talk to your children about their internet use.** The holidays are a perfect time to talk to your children about what they do on the internet and this may give you some reassurance. There is a lot of scaremongering in the media about all the risks to children but much of it is poor, lazy reporting. Different children will have different amounts of knowledge, risk-taking and resilience. Talk with them about what they like to do online, where they go and who they talk to. This is the same conversation that we would have with our children in their 'real world' activities.

Two of the most important things to remember

Think about real life behaviour

Put things into a real life context. For example, would you let your children to be in a crowd of unknown adults who may be swearing, using sexual innuendos or other things inappropriate for children to see and hear?

- Consider the online games they are playing and what age the other players may be.
- Do you know the age-rating of those games? Are your children playing 18-rated games such as Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty?
- To find out what a game is like before you buy it for your child, go onto YouTube and do a search. It is likely there will be videos of people playing the game.
- What social networking apps are they using? What are they sharing and who with?
- Would you be happy with all of this in the real world?

Be approachable, ready to listen and talk

Children need to know they can come to you if something is wrong or if something upsets them. Reinforce this message; let them know you are there for them. Even if you don't know what to do yourself you will know somebody who can help or there are plenty of resources online that can help you.

Kids will be kids; risk-taking is a part of growing up. Again, think about the real world: as a parent you will have that instinct if something is wrong online, exactly as you would in the real world. For example, a change of behaviour or attitude can be a sign that something is not right. When we notice a change in our children we talk to them to try and get to the bottom of things.

Handy websites for parents

YouTube

www.youtube.com

This is a fantastic resource to find out so much. If you want to know the answer to something, there's a pretty good chance someone has made a video to help you along. For example, do you need to know how to use the PEGI ratings and privacy settings on a Playstation or Xbox? Want to know how to set the internet filter on an iPhone? How about those privacy and security settings on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all the other apps out there? Or even if you want to have a glimpse at some of the games children are playing. Find out about parent resources and safety on YouTube at:
<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802272>

Common Sense Media

www.commonsensemedia.org

There is a lot of information on the Common Sense Media website that parents will find really handy. Games, apps, videos along with age ratings, suitability, and things that parents need to know.

Think U Know

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

The Think U Know website has some great resources such as information videos for parents and for children. Many children will already know about this site, there's a good chance they will have watched a few of the videos at school, so it would be good for parents to be aware of these too.