



HERTFORDSHIRE
CONSTABULARY

Age-appropriate online safety advice for parents and carers



We are often asked by parents and carers for advice about keeping children safe when online.

Depending on the child's age, they may not have yet discovered computers, smartphones or tablets, unless it's just pressing the buttons! Alternatively, they may already be using some websites, apps or even social networking sites. Many adults fear their children know more about these things than they do, but they almost certainly don't have the life-experience and wisdom to handle all of the situations they may encounter. Nowadays, in the age of smartphones and tablets – effectively mini-computers that can be used anywhere – many parents find it a real challenge to not only educate their children to do the right thing, but to monitor and supervise their online behaviour and to know how to spot the signs that something is wrong.

Here are some recommended sources for advice:

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of unbiased, factual and easy-to-understand information on online safety. The site covers a wide range of topics, and includes a section entitled "Safeguarding Children". Within this section are links to some simple checklists to help you keep your kids safe online according to their age group. Visit: <https://www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children/>

ThinkUKnow, from the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, aims to keep children and young people safe by providing access for everyone to practical information and advice. The site has areas for children to visit, appropriate to their age group, and also an area for parents and carers. The Parents And Carers area includes "I am concerned about my child", "I need to report an incident", and also has a "Get Advice" section which can be filtered by age group and topic, and includes:

"Sharing Pictures Of Your Children"

"I'm worried my child might see something inappropriate online"

"Nude selfies: a parents' guide"

"Are you worried your child is being sexually exploited?"

"What is online grooming?"

"Spotting the signs of sexual abuse"

Visit: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

Childnet International is an established non-profit organisation working with others to help make the internet a great and safe place for children. The website has a section for parents and carers, which includes an overview leaflet, some suggested conversation starters and some advice about "hot topics", such as Apps, Gaming, Parental Controls, Sexting and Cyberbullying. Visit: <http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

Internet Matters is another non-profit organisation working to keep children safe in the digital world. Their advice section includes age-appropriate advice for parents, as well as sections entitled "setting up your child's devices safely" and "child friendly apps". Visit <https://www.internetmatters.org>

NSPCC Net Aware provides a guide to the social networks, sites, apps and games that children use. You can search for each site, app or game, such as Ask.fm, Boom Beach, Snapchat or Instagram and you will be given a summary including the site's purpose and minimum age, why kids like it, signing up, reporting of concerns and privacy settings. Visit: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk>

Join Hertfordshire's Neighbourhood Watch to receive local alerts and crime prevention advice. Visit www.owl.co.uk