

Keeping children safe online



You can make sure your child is safe online by using technical parental controls and creating your own rules. Rules should cover things like which websites they can visit and how long they can spend online. You should also stress the importance of keeping personal information safe.

Parental controls

Computers and other digital technologies like games consoles and mobile phones have parental controls. These let you do things like:

- block selected websites and email addresses by adding them to a filter list
- set time limits for use
- prevent your child from searching certain words

Before you set rules you can check the equipment's user manual or the manufacturers' websites to see what controls you have access to. You can also contact your internet service provider (ISP) or mobile phone operator to find out about any child safety measures they offer.

Setting rules with your child

When making a set of rules for using the internet, it's a good idea to include your child. Being involved will help them understand the dangers and give them a sense of responsibility. It will also let them know what kind of websites you think are suitable. The best way to keep your child safe online is to get on the internet yourself to learn how they use it. This will help you to set reasonable rules.

Acceptable internet use

Some examples of acceptable use might include:

- the internet-connected computer must be in a family room with the screen facing outward so you can see what's going on
- if your child accidentally goes to an unsuitable website they should tell you - you can delete it from the 'history' folder and add the address to the parental control filter list
- it's never OK to use abusive or threatening language in any online communication
- your child should take breaks from the computer every 30 minutes for health and safety reasons
- your child shouldn't download unknown files from the internet without you agreeing - it's best to never download unknown files at all