

5 Top tips to keep your children safe

Talk

Talk with your children about what they are doing online. Find out which websites they visit and how they communicate with their friends online. Are they using instant messaging programs like MSN Messenger, or are they texting their friends using their mobile phone?

Make sure your children know they can come and talk to you or another trusted adult if they are worried or upset about anything that happens online.

Rules

Together with your children, agree a set of responsible rules about using the Internet. Think about what is reasonable for the age of your children, and make sure your children are balancing the amount of time they spend online with the amount of time they spend on other activities.

Our internet safety rules are available on the website. You might want to base your guidelines on our guidelines.

Keep information safe

Make sure your children understand the importance of keeping their personal information safe. Posting personal information on websites or sending messages can lead to strangers getting hold of it. Items of personal information such as full name, address, telephone numbers, photographs and school name should all be kept secret and not posted online.

Encourage your children to think about who else might be able to see what they post on websites or send in messages.

Keep an Eye Out

Keep the family computer in an area where you can keep an eye on your children as they use it. Remember that children can also access the Internet from other devices such as mobile phones, portable music players and games consoles.

As children are older and you feel it is appropriate for them to have a computer in their bedroom, or a laptop that they can carry around,

consider installing suitable safety software that will alert you if they do something that might put them in danger. There are several commercial software products that will do this for you.

Meetings

The Internet allows young people to make new friends across the country and even across the world, allowing them to learn about new cultures and new places. However, make sure your children know that they should never meet anyone they only know online unless they take you or another responsible adult with them.