Online Safety Guide
Social Media

- Research the age restrictions of apps – don't refer to the information given in app stores as it is not always correct.
- Remind young people to set social media accounts to **'private' – apps are set to 'public' by default once downloaded.**
- Do children understand what is **'safe and unsafe'** to post online?
- Educate young people on **how** they can report their concerns online, and **who** can help.
- Parents ideally need to sit, discuss and walk through social media platforms and instant messenger apps with their children – i.e. you can set up **'family safety mode'** within certain apps.
- Support young people in making safe connections online, and building healthy relationships.
- **Please don't assume all children use the internet and apps the same the same way.** Ask young people regularly where they are going online, and how they are using it.
- **Be careful sharing your location**. Ideally children and young people should have their location services switched off on their phones, or only share their location with selected family and friends only.
- Support children and young people to have a **positive** presence online, and remind them that once something is posted online it stays posted.
- Have a conversation about who children are following, speaking to and/or engaging with online. Ask how these people make children and young people feel? E.g. does this person you follow make you feel good or bad about yourself?
- Agree on a realistic time limit as a family professionals can also support this, for gadgets and use of social media. Encourage young people to come away from technology an hour before bedtime.

Great websites to look at

Great apps to explore if children have mobile phones

SafeToNet

internet matters.org

Childnet International

OWN IT APP

NCCcybersafe

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Online Safety Guide
Online Gaming

- Games come with age ratings, or a PEGI rating. Do your research before you download the game. Some games may appear child friendly but still promote violence and/or sexual content.

- Games come with 'chat' features that allow players to communicate with each other. You can chat verbally through a head set, or through an instant messaging function. These chats work similar to most messenger apps, where people can be part of a group or a private conversation. Make sure young people and children are making safe connections online, especially as personal information is often given out accidently whilst gaming. **If they are being asked to provide personal information, photos or videos, or to meet in the real world, make sure they know to speak to a trusted adult and ask for help. Encourage young people to focus only on the game when talking to other players and avoid other topics. It is also important to just have a conversation with your children about what it is they enjoy about the games they play, and how they can keep themselves safe online.**

- Bullying can be a big concern in the gaming world, and so can online conversations that contain inappropriate themes and language. Make sure children and young people know how to block and report certain people if they are experiencing bullying on a game. Also, just remember it may not always be other young people playing these games, at times your children could be interacting with adults.

- Online games work just like any other company, in that they need to make money. Some games have created their own currency (E.g. V-Bucks in Fortnite), other games encourage users to spend money via a linked bank account/debit card. For a lot of games you can turn off or restrict in app purchases, however some other games (E.g. console games) may require a payment method to be registered before users can access.

- The longer you play games the better you become. May sound obvious but some games can't be paused, as levels need to be completed or the game needs to be played through in its entirety. This can have a huge impact on the behaviour of children and young people, and of course their sleeping patterns. Try and keep technology out of bedrooms, and encourage a good night's sleep by coming away from tech an hour before bedtime, and work with your children set realistic time limits.