

Keeping Children Safe Online during Covid-19

Some advice for Parents and Carers

Covid 19 has created a new environment for learning with parents having to become familiar with the technology to enable their children to learn from home as well as keeping them entertained and in contact with the friends whom they can no longer have contact.

It would be quite tempting to throw out the rule book and give them access to all the sites they have been nagging parents to let them use or allow them extra time on games. However the internet is still a dangerous place for rule breakers and more than ever parents need to be fully aware of exactly what their children are doing and talking to them about how to do it safely.

Here are some places to go to for advice and to go on with your children and play games and do activities with them to encourage them to stay safe and have fun learning and playing online.



Childnet have produced lots of useful resources for parents and carers

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/keeping-children-happy-and-safe-online-during-covid-19>

[Online safety activities you can do from home](#)

They are broken up into ages and include quick activities, films and plenty more fun ways to engage with your children. From identifying fake news to online bullying – there is plenty for you and your family to use.

- [For 3-7 year olds](#)
- [For 7-11 year olds](#)
- [For 11-14 year olds](#)
- [For 14-18 year olds](#)

They will be adding more content for each age group as time goes on.

Getting advice and guidance if something goes wrong

Childnet also provides some great ideas to help families if their children see something online which is not intended for them. This can include fake news, impersonation, or mean comments, there are lots of places you can go to for help and advice on how to report this

behaviour. Working together to sort these problems also helps children develop their critical skills

Making a report

[reportharmfulcontent.com](https://www.reportharmfulcontent.com) is a website designed to help you report anything which you believe shouldn't be online. There's guidance about how to report different types of content as well as help with the next steps you can take if your report isn't actioned by the site or service you have made it on.

Speaking to someone

For young people - depending on the age of your child there are a range of places they can go to for help. For younger children they can [call Childline](#) for help and support, and for older children [The Mix](#) offer free and practical advice.

For parents and carers - [The O2 and NSPCC helpline](#) can help you with any questions or concerns you may have about keeping your child safe online. They can provide you with advice and help to troubleshoot any problems your family may be facing.

Making the most of the internet as a family

A [family agreement](#) is a great way to start a conversation with your whole family about how you all use the internet. As you have everyone at home, it's a fantastic way to set boundaries and discuss how you are all going to use technology during this time. Where is tech going to be used in your home? How are you going to share it and what times of the day can different family members have access? It's also a great way to discuss how to behave online and talk about what happens if something upsets or worries your child.

[Having a conversation](#)

As a parent or carer, the best tool to support your child in leading a happy and safe life online is open conversation. The [Parents' Guide](#) gives advice on how to begin these discussions, how to work together as a family to support your child online, and how to handle difficult conversations or situations.

[Topic specific advice for parents and carers](#)

From livestreaming and parental controls, to grooming, the website has advice for parents and carers on a [range of topics](#).

Staying connected with your peers

We are seeing some ingenious ways of people keeping in touch using technology, from virtual PE lessons with The Body Coach on YouTube, to year groups having Skype calls at the time when school breaks would be. There are so many ways that young people can stay connected during this time.



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

<https://www.iwf.org.uk>

This organisation works to remove sites with inappropriate images of children and make the internet safer place. They have a reporting system in place as well as working with other agencies or try to remove child abuse images from the internet

This organisation has expressed concern that activity online to approach young people to post indecent images will increase in these times of social isolation. The IWF say that more and more of this material is filmed by children themselves in their bedrooms in a family home

Reports can be made at

<https://report.iwf.org.uk/en>

The public is given this advice when making a report:

- Do report images and videos of child sexual abuse to the IWF to be removed. Reports to the IWF are anonymous.
- Do provide the exact URL where child sexual abuse images are located.
- Don't report other harmful content – you can find details of other agencies to report to on the IWF's website.
- Do report to the police if you are concerned about a child's welfare,
- Do report only once for each web address – or URL. Repeat reporting of the same URL isn't needed and wastes analysts' time.
- Do report non-photographic visual depictions of the sexual abuse of children, such as computer-generated images. The images the IWF can act on must be pornographic, be grossly offensive, and focus on a child's genitals or depict sexual activity involving or in the presence of a child. Anything of this nature, which is also hosted in the UK, the IWF can get removed.



Digital Parenting

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting>

This magazine and webpages are produced by Vodafone and are packed with online safety advice.

They have also produced a Family pledge to help families start discussions about online safety which might be useful as online activity increases

<https://www.vodafone.co.uk/mobile/digital-parenting/family-pledge>



Safer Schools

<https://oursaferschools.co.uk/home-learning-hub/>

This website is currently offering free resources for parents and carers who are home schooling on their Home School Learning Hub

Some other useful sites for parents and carers

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and carers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers