Digital saftey
A guide for profesionals

This is a guide for professionals about digital safety.

Children now are growing up in a digital world. Much of their lives play out online and it is important to acknowledge this. This guide will help you to support children to navigate the online world and includes:

- Balancing the risks with the positive aspects of social media.
- Having conversations with children about their use of social media.
- How to put restrictions on devices so that they can be used as safely as possible.
- Safe use of key platforms.
- Guidelines for protecting children's wellbeing when they are using digital media.

Risk and resilience:

Children's use of digital media continues to increase year-on-year, and whilst children are aware that there are risks connected to being online, the majority of 8-17 year olds who use social media say that using these platforms helps them to foster friendships.

For any children or young people who are upset, connection to their peers is an important protective factor. It is important to recognise that the use of digital platforms is one way that they will connect. Therefore, complete removal of phones, tablets, and iPads is not recommended.

Protective factors for anyone who is upset:

- Belongingness (family, friends, community and school)
- Connection to others
- Strong family relationships
- Clear, age-appropriate information
- Ability to express feelings safely
- Normal routines
- Space to talk openly

Digital media provides opportunities to access these protective factors for some children. Therefore, open conversations about their use of social media and digital platforms are essential.

Golden Rules for conversations about social media use

The British Council has created an [infographic](#) which highlights the golden rules of supporting children's use of social media.

1. **Show me:** Ask children to show you how their social media platforms work and how they use them.
2. **Low profile:** Show children how to keep their profiles private.
3. **Just ask:** Ask children about who they are talking to online.
4. **Photo check:** Talk to children about only sharing photos that they would be happy to show to everyone they know.
5. **Don't worry:** Create a culture where children are able to tell you when they are worried about what they see online.

Control settings at device level

Due to the addictive nature of screens, it is helpful to put screentime limits onto devices.

Device	Guide to setting screentime limits
Apple iPhones	[Use Screen Time on your iPhone or iPad – Apple Support (UK)](#)
Android phones	[Manage your child's screen time - Google For Families Help](#)

[Internet Matters](#) provide advice on how to ensure control settings are enabled on devices.

Device	Video guide to control settings	PDF guide to control settings
[Android phones](#)		

Apple iPhones and iPads		Apple Iphone And Ipad Parental Control Guide Controls & settings guide
Android tablets		Android Tablet Safety Controls & settings guide
All other devices: Guides for Apple and Android devices parental controls | Internet Matters		

Control settings for apps and platforms

All these platforms have age restrictions, however in reality these restrictions are easily ignored, and nuance should be used in making decisions about safe use. Internet Matters have created videos and guides to explain how to put safety restrictions in place.

Platform or app	Age	PDF guide to setting controls	Video guide to setting controls	Additional guides
WhatsApp (Messaging service)	13+	Whatsapp Privacy Guide Controls & settings guide	WhatsApp	
Snapchat (Photo sharing service)	13+	Snapchat Privacy Settings Guide Controls & settings guide	Snapchat Parental Guide	

Discord (Messaging platform, popular with gamers)	13+	internet matters.org Discord App Safety Settings Guide Controls & settings guide	Discord Parental Guide	Set up Discord Parental Controls
Other apps: [Parental controls and privacy settings guides | Internet Matters](#)				

Managing digital use and wellbeing

Digital devices and social media are designed to be addictive. This addictive nature affects everyone, but more so children whose brains are still developing. It is important that children are taught to balance screen time. The following suggestions can be used as a guide, more advice can be found at Internet Matters: [Screen time tips for 11-14 yrs - KS3 \| Resources - Internet Matters](#)

Signs of dependence on digital devices

- Preferring screen time over face-to-face interaction with friends and family
- Difficulties focussing on activities that are not screen-based
- Feeling anxious about not having their device available
- Mood swings
- Sleep disturbance

What helps?

- ✓ Ensure that regular complete breaks are taken from screens throughout the day
- ✓ Get outside during daylight hours
- ✓ Talk to children about the addictive nature of screens
- ✓ Provide opportunities to connect face-to-face with peers
- ✓ Encourage family-wide non-screen times during the day
- ✓ Encourage adults to model healthy screen use
- ✓ Ensure child is eating healthily and drinking enough water
- ✓ Encourage a good bedtime routine and set time to come off phones and devices

- ✓ Follow the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) to ensure a balance of activities
- ✓ Ensure children know how to report harmful content and that they can identify a safe adult to talk to
- ✓ Ensure the adults around the child know how to identify and report harmful content

Reporting harmful content

If a child or young person is experiencing online bullying this should be reported to the police. Internet Matters have created a clear guide to dealing with and reporting harmful content: [Dealing with inappropriate content| Internet Matters](#)

Key services to be aware of

Type of content	Report to
Adult acting inappropriately towards a child (particularly in a sexual nature)	[CEOP](#)
Indecent images of children	[Internet Watch Foundation](#)
Social media inappropriate content	Individual sites /apps using "report" buttons Details of all reporting procedures can be found on the [Report Harmful Content](#) site
Hate speech	[True Vision](#)
Extremist material	[Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit](#)
Content containing: threats, impersonation, self-harm or suicide, online abuse, violent content, pornographic content, unwanted sexual advances	[Report Harmful Content](#)