



MILTON KEYNES PREPARATORY SCHOOL

SAFER INTERNET DAY/INTERNET SAFETY WORKSHOP

Information for Parents

February 2019



SAVE the DATE
Safer Internet Day
2019 | Tuesday
5 February
www.saferinternetday.org



What role does technology play in young people's lives?

Safer Internet Day (Tuesday 5th February 2019) aims to not only create a safer internet but also a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.

Used responsibly in schools, internet use can enhance teaching and is a powerful tool for supporting teachers in planning, organising and developing teaching programmes, assessment procedures and day-to-day management and communication.

At MKPS we take the maximum possible care to ensure that your child's internet use and online integrity is protected, whilst raising awareness of the possible hazards associated with internet usage.

The aims and objectives of offering internet access to the children are:

- To promote and encourage safe online behaviours
- To enable children to enjoy a positive interactive experience online
- To enhance learning and communication skills
- To promote cross-curricula links
- To help the children be autonomous users.

The UK Safer Internet Centre have published a report whose research shows that the internet plays a central role in young people's lives and their friendships in increasingly diverse ways; from expressing themselves with selfies and emojis to chatting with friends while gaming online. The majority of young people in this research said that they would feel isolated if they couldn't talk to friends via technology.

Digital friendships: the role of technology in young people's relationships

It seems that the expectations about what makes a good friend are shifting. Young people now believe it is important for friends to reply to their messages and say that you need to maintain a Snapchat streak for at least 73 days to show you are good friends. Exclusion and meanness are a common experience, with around 50% of young people surveyed saying they had experienced this online within the past year. Over 40% said they had felt anxious or worried in the last week because of something online.

However, it is also clear from the research that the internet plays a hugely positive role in young people's lives. The overwhelming majority are regularly experiencing positive emotions and people being kind to them when they're online. Technology also provides an important way for them to support their peers who may be going through difficult times.

Parents, carers and schools are an important source of support for children and young people

Children want their parents and carers to be there for and to support them. However sometimes they feel like their parents don't understand their online lives, so it is essential that the time is taken to listen and empathise. That also means respecting the importance to them of digital technology and understanding the occasional challenges they face.

Parents need to reassure children that they can talk to them about any concerns without getting into trouble, as well as offering to help them navigate the challenges they may experience. It is also important for parents to focus on the positives and offer engaging opportunities to create and connect, helping children to create a positive digital footprint.

Schools also play an important role in educating and empowering children to use technology respectfully, responsibly and creatively, and in establishing a culture of supportive kindness that promotes wellbeing by offering opportunities for learning and creativity.

There a range of strategies that young people might use if something upsets them online, such as blocking. Schools can help to ensure young people both know and use these strategies to cope with any difficulties they experience.

Whilst tools like reporting and blocking are very important ways of equipping young people to manage bullying and abuse, it is also important to understand that behaviours like social exclusion can have just as much of a damaging impact but may not be easy to detect and manage in digital spaces.

Everyone has a responsibility to make a positive difference online.

Technology is changing what friendship means and how young people express themselves, how they define 'good' friendships and interact with each other. It is clear that young people are having to navigate new friendship norms and complex friendship dynamics.

- When asked, 40% of respondents aged 8-17 say that it is easier to tell someone how they feel online than in person
- 84% use emojis to express feelings
- 72% use slang terms
- 70% use facial expressions in selfies
- 63% use images
- Girls are more likely to express their feelings online
- Girls are more likely to use filters to express feelings (63%) in comparison to boys (46%).

Strategies and support in a digital world

Many young people are showing maturity and initiative in the approaches they are developing to navigate the digital world and display a wide range of coping strategies, from taking a break from technology to speaking to friends or parents. They show how they are supporting each other and acknowledge their responsibility in helping to build a better and more respectful internet. They are also expressing the need for support from the adults in their lives, wanting them to understand and help them when things go wrong. This support is mutual and many young people are also helping their parents and carers online.

How young people are managing their online lives

When asked what they would do if someone upset them online, respondents aged 8-17 said they would be most likely to:

- Do something else offline that they enjoy (65%)
- Do something else online that they enjoy (63%)
- Speak to a parent or carer (62%)
- Speak to friends (60%)
- Report it or block the person (58%)

Parental controls

Parental controls are designed to help protect children from inappropriate content they may come across online, such as pornography. These controls can be used to limit access to only age-appropriate content, to set usage times and to monitor activity and it can help to use a combination of these to increase their effectiveness.

The main places you can find parental controls are:

- Internet provider: you can set up filters to help block access to inappropriate content on any device that connects to WiFi in your home;
- Mobile operator: filters are often automatically set up on mobile contracts, but you can double-check with your provider;
- Devices: many devices have parental control settings, for example, to help restrict spending in apps or disable location functions;
- Online services: sites like BBC iPlayer and YouTube have parental control settings to help restrict access to inappropriate content.

It's worth being aware that no parental controls or filtering options are 100% effective. As children grow up, they can become quite tech-savvy and they may learn how to disable the parental controls already put in place.

Be aware also that once parental controls by your internet provider are set up on your WiFi, if your child can access 3G or 4G at home, the parental controls can be bypassed.

Similarly, if your child goes to their friend's house where there are no parental controls in place, they will be able to access whatever they want. **For these reasons, it's important to educate your child about the potential risks online**, and establish rules concerning the sites that are suitable, or inappropriate, to visit.

The '[family agreement](https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/family-agreement-advice.pdf)' (see <https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/family-agreement-advice.pdf>) is a great place to start to begin these conversations. It is also good to give your child strategies on how to cope with anything upsetting they see online (eg. they could turn the tablet screen down immediately and come and find an adult who will remedy the situation by getting rid of the website/picture). **It's important that you involve yourself in their online world**; as a starting point you could ask them what their favourite websites are and why they like them.

Where should I begin?

Once you have bought a new device for your child, have a look at the instructions that came with it as these normally contain some information and a step by step guide on how to install parental controls. You could also search the name of the device plus the words 'parental controls' online, eg. 'Nintendo 2DS + parental controls' - this can help you to find how-to guides and useful video tutorials.

The UK Safer Internet Centre Guides (available online at www.saferinternet.org.uk) offer guidance on setting up filters on your home internet, understanding parental control tools on devices and the safety settings on social networks and other online services.

Smartphones, tablets and gaming devices

Children can access the internet on a range of different devices, such as smartphones, laptops, gaming devices (eg. Nintendo 3DS, Xbox and PS) or tablets (eg. iPad or Kindle). Using these devices they are capable of social networking, listening to music, playing games, browsing the internet, checking emails, taking photos and videos and watching TV – along with the usual texting and calling! They offer a variety of interesting activities and ways to engage with friends and families. However, it is important to be aware of what these devices can do and how you can talk with your child to help them to use this technology in safe and positive way.

They connect to the internet in three main ways, and you might want to consider filtering options:

1. **3G/4G**: this provides access to the internet via your mobile's data allowance as part of your mobile contract. Filters are often set up by default, but you can check with your mobile operator to ensure they are activated for your children's devices.
2. **Connect to your home WiFi**: devices can connect to the internet at home (which saves using your 3G/4G mobile data allowance). All of the major internet providers offer free filtering tools that work across all devices connected to the home WiFi.

3. *Access public WiFi*: it's also possible to connect to public WiFi when you're out and about, with shops, cafes and restaurants increasingly offering internet access. Look out for this Friendly WiFi symbol which means the content has been filtered.



Three steps for parents:

1. When you sign up to a mobile contract, make sure that you and your child understand the contract's internet data allowance – accessing the internet uses internet data and if you go over your allowance it may cost you.
2. Understand the capabilities of smartphones and tablets and how as a parent you can support your child to be smart and safe when using them. To help with this, the UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a number of helpful technology guides, FAQs and checklists. Check their website <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>.
3. Talk with your child about safe and responsible smartphone and tablet use and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could discuss with your child about not meeting up with people they have only met online, how much they are allowed to spend on apps, what websites it's OK and not OK to visit, and whether their phone/tablet should be switched off at night. The same advice and rules for keeping safe online apply.

Parental controls

It can really help to be informed about how to install parental controls onto each device your child may be using.

Gaming devices

All modern gaming devices offer parental controls to help you manage how your child uses their device, but these do need to be set up in order for them to be operational.

Three steps for parents:

1. Understand the capabilities of gaming devices and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming. To help with this, the UK Safer Internet Centre have produced a number of helpful technology guides, FAQs and checklists. Check their website <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>.
2. Find out about the parental controls available - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these. Find out about PEGI age ratings at www.pegi.info to help you decide which games are appropriate for your child's age.

3. Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online. Remember that gaming devices can connect to the internet, so the same advice and rules for keeping safe online apply.

Smart TVs

Smart TVs allow you to watch TV, as well as being able to browse the internet and watch TV on catch-up or on services such as Netflix, BBC iPlayer etc.

1. All home internet providers offer free parental controls tools that can help reduce the chances of your child coming across something inappropriate while browsing the web. If you are worried about the type of content your child might search for on your smart TV, if you have put parental controls in place on your WiFi router, these parental controls will also be applied to the browser of your smart TV.
2. If you would like to restrict your children from watching certain TV programmes that you find unsuitable, you can see the parental controls on TV on demand services which allows you to restrict certain apps or programmes and put in place a PIN code to ensure your children aren't watching inappropriate content.

Some final words

Talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and how to stay safe. Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen. There are many websites that can offer guidance, such as the NSPCC who have a really useful guide on how to start those conversations.

Explore your child's online activities with your child. Understand why they like using them and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.

Agree your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games.

Manage your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe.

Some useful websites:

www.saferinternet.org.uk – tips, advice, guides and resources for parents

www.childnet.com – very child-friendly website with lots of helpful advice for children

www.pegi.info – offers guidance as to what the gaming age ratings mean

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk – both these websites offer advice on keeping children safe online

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-glossary> - this helpful glossary offers detailed definitions for a huge number of digital terms you may not be familiar with.