Online Safety Newsletter December 2021

Is your child about to get their first phone?

EE have launched PhoneSmart Licence, which is a course to help prepare children for their new phone by teaching them how to stay safe and be kind online. PhoneSmart is free and available to everyone, not just EE customers.

Your child will have to complete 5 sections and as they complete each episode, they will be rewarded with a sticker. Once they have collected all 5, they will be given their PhoneSmart Licence.

The site also includes several useful articles to support you, for example what to do when buying their phone, information about parental controls and where to go for further advice. Follow the link below to access:

https://eephonesmart.co.uk/



Parental controls



With Christmas just around the corner, we thought we'd provide a little reminder about setting up appropriate parental controls for any new phones, consoles or games your child may receive.

Games/consoles

First, check the PEGI rating of any new games to check that your child is old enough to be playing them. PEGI provides age classifications for video games and **considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.** It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration user generated content within games (such as on Roblox) and the chat facilities within games. Visit PEGI here: https://pegi.info/

For any new consoles, it is important to set up appropriate controls such as restricting spending limits and managing who they can communicate with. Follow the links below to find out about Parental Controls for each device:



Nintendo: https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.html
PS5: https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/
Xbox: https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming

Tablets/Smart phones



As well as setting up parental controls on the device itself, remember to check any apps your child would like on their device, is it suitable for their age and review all settings and privacy options for each one. For the devices, use the available settings to prevent purchases, restrict content viewed and adjust privacy settings. Follow the links below to find out more:

iPhones/iPads: https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304
Google Play: https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738



Further information

Information, tips and advice on setting up parental controls: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.
Current as of the date released 1.12.21.

Online Games with chat

Is your child playing games online?



Children can communicate online through lots of different apps, social media and games (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, FIFA, Fortnite for example), so it's important to know what your child is doing online and who they communicate with so you can talk about the potential risks together.

Some games include communication between players, this could be via the in-game text chat, direct messages or talking through headphones. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off or restrict bad language so make sure settings appropriate to your child are set up for each of the games they play.



Chatting to strangers

When playing online, your child might be playing games with people they don't know. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players that make them feel uncomfortable and that they know to talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Be kind



It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they are speaking to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect, like they would if they were face-to-face.

Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages (or sees something that worries them) then they should not reply or engage in conversation with the person, but they should instead tell a trusted adult.

Further information

These additional links will provide you with further guidance and support regarding this topic:

- https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/talking-to-people-online-when-should-i-be-worried/
- https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/online-gaming/

A guide to location settings

Many apps and games now ask users to share their location. It's important that your child understands the risk of location sharing and that you can discuss when it is appropriate to share. You can read more here:

https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/a-parents-guide-to-location-settings/

My Family's Digital Toolkit

Would you like a personalised online safety toolkit? Answer a few questions about your children's digital habits and then you will receive age-specific advice to support your children online. The form does require an email address. You can find out more information here:

https://www.internetmatters.org/digital-family-toolkit/

Helping My Autistic Child Stay Safe Online

The Ann Craft Trust and The Marie Collins Foundation have joined forces to create a resource to help parents and children understand various online risks. The booklet includes information about what online harm is and ways you can effectively help and support your children. Download a copy here:

https://www.anncrafttrust.org/helping-my-autistic-child-stay-safe-online/