Online Safety Advice for Parents and Children

Long Lawford
Primary School

Love, Learn, Persevere and Succeed

Online safety tips for parents of primary school children

Checklist

☑ **Put yourself in control**
Make use of the parental controls on your home broadband and any internet-enabled devices. You can find out how at your broadband provider's website or by visiting internetmatters.org.

☑ **Search safely**
Use safe search engines such as swiggle.org.uk or kids-search.com. Safe search settings can also be activated on Google and other search engines as well as YouTube. You can find out more at google.co.uk/safetycentre.

☑ **Agree boundaries**
Be clear what your child can and can't do online – where they can use the internet, how much time they can spend online, the sites they can visit and the type of information they can share. Agree with your child when they can have a mobile phone or tablet.

Over 65 % of parents are most concerned about their 6-10 viewing inappropriate content online*

☑ **Explore together**
The best way to find out what your child is doing online is to ask them to tell you about it. Encourage them to use devices in communal areas so you can see what sites they're visiting and share with them.

☑ **Check if it's suitable**
The age ratings that come with games, apps, films and social networks are a good guide to whether they're suitable for your child. The minimum age limit is 13 for several social networking sites, including Facebook and Instagram.

Know this stuff matters, but don't know where to turn?

Internet Matters is a free online resource for every parent in the UK. We'll show you the best ways to protect your children online – with information, advice and support on all the big e-safety issues.

internet matters.org

Learn about it:
Teach your child some simple rules

- Make sure your child knows not to share personal information like their phone number or email address online
- Only talk to real life friends or family if they are on sites with a social media element like Moshi Monsters or Club Penguin
- Use privacy settings wherever they exist to keep their information private
- Be a good online friend and don't say nasty things even if it's just a joke
- Use secure and legal sites to download music and games
- Check attachments and pop ups for viruses before they click or download anything
- Use Public Friendly WiFi when they're out and about to filter inappropriate content
- Help them to better understand the different online platforms they use and judge the quality and reliability of online resources

Talk about it:
Tips for a meaningful conversation

- Start conversations when your children won't be embarrassed, for example in the car going home from school
- Ask them for advice on how to do something online and use this as a conversation starter
- Make sure they know they can come to you if they're upset by something they've seen online
- Be sensitive and praise them when they share their online experiences with you
- If your child comes to you with an issue, stay calm and listen without judging them
- Talk about online grooming as you would stranger danger and explain that people they meet online might not be who they say they are
- Ask them about things online which might make them uncomfortable

Deal with it

You can find out where to get help and advice on the Report it page of internetmatters.org, where we include information on how to report problems – and which relevant organisations and agencies to turn to.

On this page, we also provide information on how to deal with any specific issues you may encounter with your child; such as finding inappropriate content and cyberbullying.

Stay safe at secondary school
Exposure to some of these issues increases when children move up to secondary school so make sure your child is prepared – find out more with our pre-teens age guide at internetmatters.org/ageguide10-13

internet matters.org

Parents' guide:
Gaming advice to support pre-teens

What to think about:

Ways games can benefit children

If your child is a keen gamer, **steer them towards games that will help them to develop life skills** like problem-solving or supplement their learning.

Be aware of game content and themes

It's important to **stay on top of what themes are featured in the games** they play so that you can be aware of how these might influence their view of the real world.

What to talk about

Discuss what they enjoy playing

Have regular conversations about the games they play so you can create an environment where they feel they can come to you if something goes wrong.

Talk about potential risks

Help them understand the **importance of keeping personal details private** and tell them that not everyone online is who they say they are.

How to cope when things go wrong

If they see something that upsets them or are targeted by another player in a game, it's important to talk about how to handle this situation. **Advise them to come and talk to you or a trusted adult for support.**
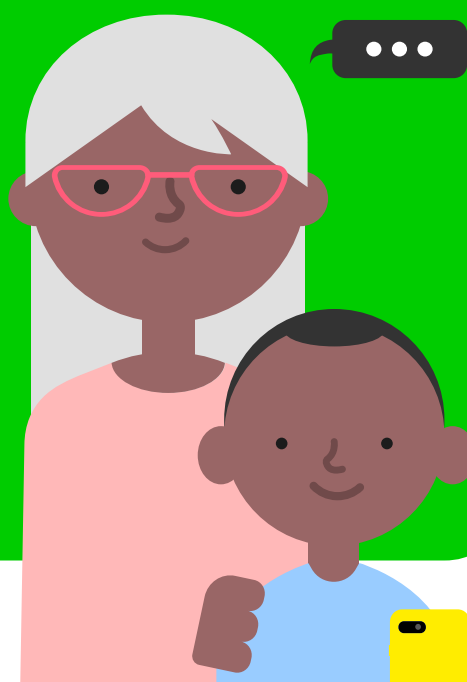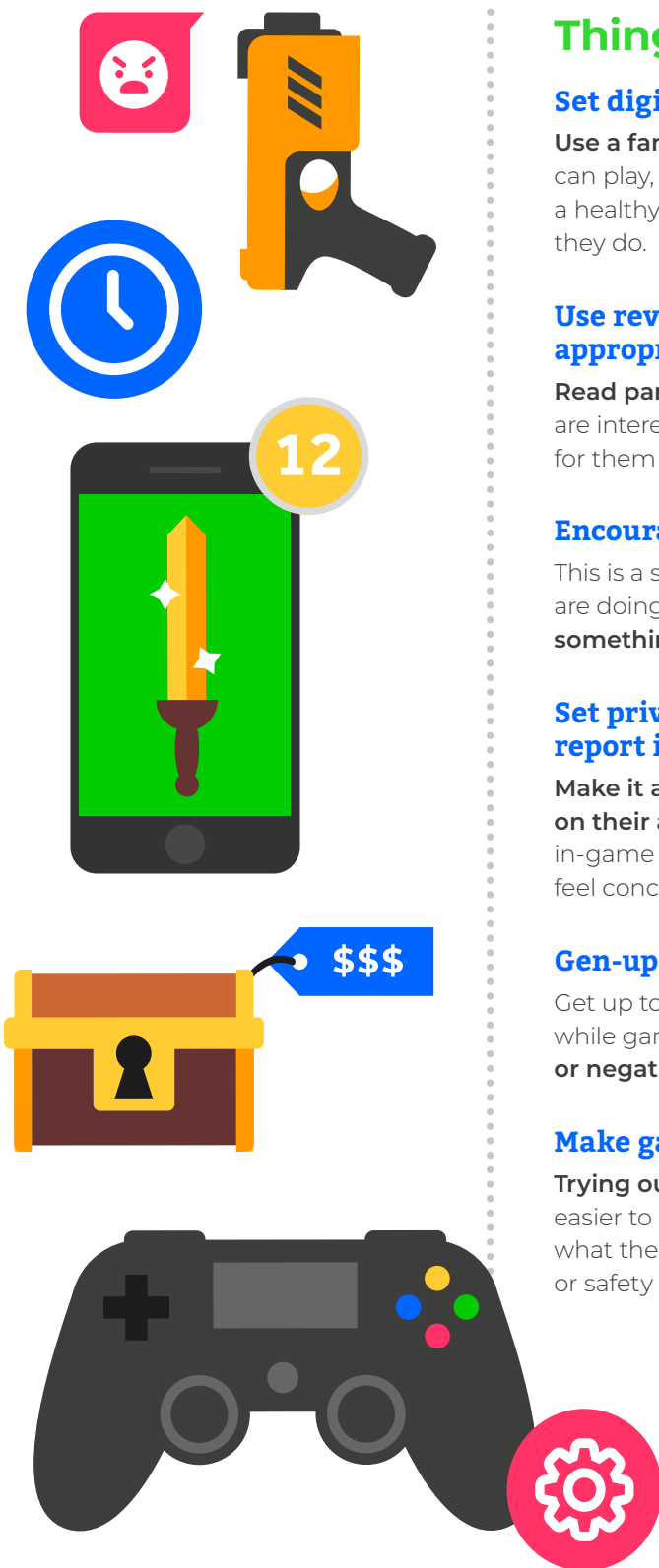
Things to do

Set digital boundaries

Use a family agreement to set rules on what they can play, when and how long for to help them strike a healthy balance between gaming other activities they do.

Use reviews and sites to pick appropriate games

Read parents and expert reviews of games they are interested in to help you choose the right games for them to play.

Encourage them to play in shared spaces

This is a simple way to stay engaged in what they are doing while gaming and **step in if you feel something's not quite right.**

Set privacy settings and learn how to report in-game abuse

Make it a habit to review their privacy settings on their account and teach them where to report in-game abuse so they can take action if they feel concerned.

Gen-up on the lingo

Get up to speed on how players communicate while gaming to **spot the signs of cyberbullying or negative behaviour.**

Make gaming a family affair

Trying out new games with children makes it easier to relate and can give you a better sense of what the game is about and prompt conversation or safety measures to help them stay safe.

# What are the benefits and challenges of screen use?

Screen time benefits

- Screen use provides a range of opportunities for creativity and learning – **70% of parents strongly agree that using devices is essential** for their child's development *Source: Internet Matters Look both ways report.*

- Screens can be a great tool to allow children to **maintain relationships** with family and friends.

- **Screens can help ease the financial burden** when looking to entertain children.

Screen time challenges

- Young children might stumble **across inappropriate content** that may have a negative impact on their digital wellbeing.

- Passive screen time **could have a physical effect on their development** (i.e. eyes, brain), sleep cycle and behaviour.

- Younger children **may not understand the concept of what the internet is** and how it works so could find it hard to differentiate between what it real and what is fake.
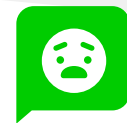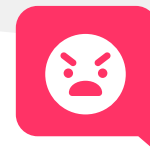
5 top tips to balance screen time

1 Set digital rules together

Agree digital boundaries together with your child to get them involved in the process and build up their understanding of why it's beneficial for them to stick to them.

Choosing device free zones in the home, keeping phones out of the bedroom at night and using free tools to turn devices on and off at different times of the day are just some ways to help children strike a healthy balance between activities on and offline.

Also, it's a good idea to encourage them to take a break every 30 minutes and use screens in short bursts. Experts recommend turning screens off an hour before bedtime to give children time to wind down.

2 Stay engaged in their screen use

Get engaged and stay engaged in their digital life as they grow. The more you get involved and understand the things your children do online, the easier it is to gain their respect and influence what they do in their digital world.

Ensure they have a healthy mix of screen activities that encourage creativity, learning & education, connecting with family & friends, as well as using devices for downtime.

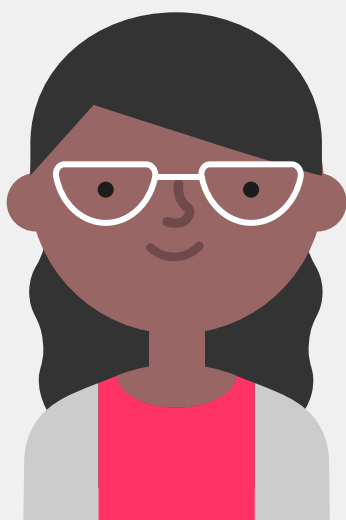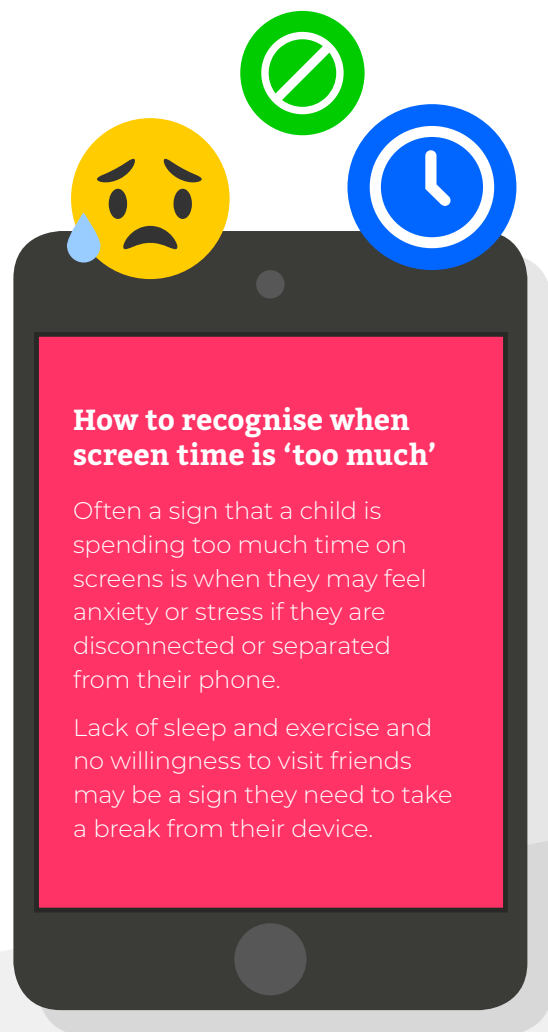## 3 Discuss online risks and strategies to tackle them

Take time to **help them understand the risks and benefits of using the internet,** whether it be discussing what steps to take if they see something that upsets them or guiding them towards apps and platforms that will help them explore their passions and enhance their skills.

4 Set a good example with your own screen use

Children will tend to model their behaviour on you, so if you encourage them to take breaks when on screens or leave phones out of the bedroom at night, they will follow your lead.

5 Use tech tools to manage their time & access to media

Whatever device your child uses, **be sure to make use of free and premium tools available** to manage their access to age-appropriate content and review the time they spend on specific online activities.

How to recognise when screen time is 'too much'

Often a sign that a child is spending too much time on screens is when they may feel anxiety or stress if they are disconnected or separated from their phone.

Lack of sleep and exercise and no willingness to visit friends may be a sign they need to take a break from their device.

The truth about screen time

Not all screen time is created equal so it's important to encourage children to have a healthy balance between passive screen time (i.e watching YouTube) and interactive screen time (i.e. creating content or playing games online).

There is no safe level of screen time but it doesn't mean that all screen time is harmful. Lack of evidence has meant that experts have found it hard to recommend a cut-off for children screen time overall.

One size does not fit all when it comes to screen time – it's more about getting it right for your families needs.

Set Up Safe

Helping parents keep their children safe online.

internet matters.org

We've designed a simple checklist to give you peace of mind regarding your child's safety on the internet.

Set your children's device up before you give it to them so you know they're safe online as soon as they start playing.

Get started

Set parental controls on your broadband to prevent your children seeing things they shouldn't

For smart phones check parental controls are also set up on the mobile network
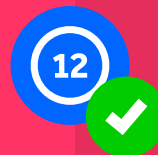
Set up the device safely

Use the device setting so you can only download age appropriate apps and games

Disable location services so your child doesn't unintentionally share their location with others

Set up password control or disable in-app purchasing so big bills are not run up accidentally

Download age appropriate apps you're happy for your child to use

Talk about staying safe

If your children are 8-10 years old, download our parent / child Internet Matters app to help you talk about e-safety issues in an interactive way.

Be aware of key issues and how to discuss them with your children so they know how to stay safe online

If your child is using social networking apps check their profile and privacy settings, making sure they are not sharing personal or private information with people they do not know