

HINTS AND TIPS FOR AT HOME

Children spend lots of time using the Internet at school, at friends' houses, on a mobile phone, via a games console or at home. They might visit social networking sites (including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), or use instant messaging (such as WhatsApp or Messenger) to chat to friends or play on online gaming sites. Youtube is also extremely popular. These are often blocked on school computers but are very popular with children.

You can buy special filtering and blocking software to protect your children, and most Internet browser software has some filters and security in place. Filtering software lets parents choose what is suitable for their children to look at, but parents must be aware that this software is not always 100% effective.

If you keep your PC 'anti-virus' security up to date you should not have problems with most threats from the internet or from downloaded email attachments. The popular browsers such as Microsoft Internet Explorer and Google Chrome also let you control or block things such as unwanted pop-up advertisements and "cookies" e.g. when a website downloads a small file to your PC to remember your name/login.

Always take care to protect your home computer and members of the family who use it.

- Talk to your child and ask them to show you how they use the internet and the computer, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together can often open opportunities to discuss safe practise with your child.
- Make sure you know what your children are doing online - such as what sites they visit and who they talk to. Ensure they know not to share personal information that could identify them in the offline world.
- Have rules about how the Internet/mobile phones etc will be used at home and be clear about not sharing information online such as names, schools, phone numbers, email addresses, photos of themselves, with online friends. Have clear rules about making and meeting with online friends safely.
- Talk to your child about the risks of downloading files from unknown or potentially illegal sources or copying information from sites.
- Use family friendly search engine with younger children and bookmark favourite sites for your children to use.
- Wherever possible, locate your computer in a family area and supervise younger children. Always supervise the use of webcams in your home.

- Filter unsuitable sites so that they cannot be seen or used by your children. Internet Service Providers (like Sky or BT) will include filtering and some level of internet security. Check with them what is already available before buying extra security software. Most specialist PC stores can also advise you.
- Always ensure your child knows how to block or report another user who may be sending nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Make sure your child knows to tell an adult they trust if they see something online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable. If your child receives any abusive messages, keep them for evidence purposes to show to school or the police. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply. You can also report problems directly to service providers and websites.
- Be realistic - banning the internet will not work - children use computers and games consoles at friends' houses and at school so education around its safe use is essential. Educate your children and the whole family will benefit from using the internet.