

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ON INTERNET SAFETY & CYBER BULLYING



As parents, relatives, teachers and other adults responsible to children's safety – we want our children and those we look after to be healthy and happy ... and to develop well both physically and mentally. Above all, it's also instinctive that we want children to be safe. Children learn through exploration and natural curiosity, and it is part of our job to encourage that. However, as our children grow up, develop and discover new experiences, we have to take more and different steps to ensure their safety. Until their understanding and instincts catch up with their curiosity, our children need to be protected from everyday dangers – whether crossing the road, in and around the home, trying new foods or talking to new people they meet and sooner or later, going online.

They're growing up fast

Depending on the age that your children are now, they may not have yet discovered computers, smart phones or tablets, unless it's just pressing the buttons! Alternatively, they may already be used to using certain trusted websites or – if they're older – using social networking sites. By the time they are older still, they will probably already be 'online veterans' who know their way around the internet, apps, games, downloading and social networking with ease. Chances are, they know more about these things than you do, but they almost certainly don't have the life-experience and wisdom to handle all of the situations they encounter. This is why we need a measured approach to keeping our children safe when they're online.

Below is some useful information from the Anti Bullying Alliance for children and parents.

10 top tips for parents and carers to help protect their children and young people from cyber-bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) are keen to raise awareness of the issues surrounding cyber-bullying. Here are their 10 top tips for parents and carers:

1. **“What is bullying and Cyber-bullying?”** It is important to be clear on what is bullying. Please see www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk for a definition. Cyber-bullying is a very specific form of inappropriate behaviour. This is different from children falling out with friends or banter.
2. **“Don’t ever give out your own or your friends’ personal information”** This tip is for any kind of cyber/text/phone/gaming/online communication. Make sure your child doesn't make yours or their own personal information public - always check privacy settings on the sites they are using.
3. **“Digital Tattoos”** Help your child understand that they need to be careful what they put out into cyber-space. Pictures/comments and any other information you put out onto the internet might stay there forever. So think before you upload or send.
4. **“Make sure you understand the app!”** Ask your children what apps they are using. All apps/website/social networking sites/gaming sites have different settings. Make sure you know the privacy/safety settings and how the app works. If the app automatically posts your pictures into the public eye - not just to your friends - then, is it something you really want to use?
5. **“You CAN block and report people”** If your child has a bad experience online, they are able to block that person and report people to protect yourself from any more contact with them.
6. **“Have conversations about how they are using social media.”** Just like in the real world if your children went out with friends or to a youth event or club. Ask how are things are going, is there anything they want to talk about? Do they know they can come and talk to you if things go wrong?
7. **“Keep calm, keep talking to your child”** if your child tells you they are being cyber-bullied or are worried, upset or scared about a cyber or real-world bullying issue then talk to someone you trust to listen and sort out the problem. You can find where to get professional advice at our website: <http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/how-to-help-your-child-if-being-bullied-advice-for-parents.html> It is important to keep calm, and record what has happened and when. This helps to build up the evidence that the hurtful actions are repetitive.
8. **“Save evidence of bullying online”** If you are having a problem with someone online then you might think deleting the comments/images will make you feel better. However, if you do want to report the person - the best thing you can do is SAVE the evidence- screen shot the comments and save them somewhere safe.

Reviewed: Jan 2015 KN

Next Review: Jan 2016

9. **“Policing the internet”** If you find yourself in a situation where you feel frightened or upset by repeated bullying and bad behaviour on the internet then you can go to the police. Some kinds of bad behaviour online are seen as harassment and the police can help in some cases. But you must build up evidence - so don't forget to screen shot!

10. **“Making sure it is resolved”** Once interventions have been put in place it is important to keep checking to make sure that your child feels safe. Have discussions on how things are on-line, how they feel and what they can do to prevent things in the future. This helps to make sure that the right solutions are working and that the cyber-bullying has stopped once and for all.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance advice for children

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) A-Team are a group of young people who work with ABA to raise awareness of the issues surrounding bullying in all its forms. Here are their top ten tips for staying safe online:

1. **“Don't take everything to heart and know yourself”** Even though it might be hard, try not to get upset by other people's comments.

2. **“Don't ever give out your own or your friends' personal information”** This tip is for any kind of cyber/text/phone/gaming/online communication- make sure you don't ever make your personal information public- always check privacy settings on the site you are using.

3. **“Digital Tattoos”** Be careful what you put out into cyber-space. Pictures/comments and any other information you put out into the cyber-sphere might stay there forever. So think before you upload or send.

4. **“Make sure you understand the app!”** All apps/website/social networking sites/gaming have different settings. Make sure you know the privacy/safety settings and how the app works. If this is an app which automatically posts your pictures into the public eye - not just to your friends then, is it something you really want to use?

5. **“Know that you CAN block and report people”** If you do have a bad experience online, then know that you are able to block and report people to protect yourself from any more contact with them.

6. **“#BeCarefulWhatYouHashtag”** When you hashtag a comment, this means that ANYONE can search for that hashtag and see your comment/image and look at your profile.

7. **“Be a cyber-defender”** Everyone, including YOU have the power to be a hero. If you see an unkind comment or image - don't share it or like it. Something which may look 'just funny' to you, might be really hurting another person's feelings. And if you see something really hurtful/mean/scary/wrong- then screen shot it and report it.

8. **“Talk to someone you trust”** if you are worried, upset or scared about a cyber or real-world bullying issue then talk to someone you trust to listen and sort out the problem. This might be a parent, teacher or friend. Never forget that you aren’t alone, sharing your problem is the best thing you can do. You can find out more here: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/children-young-people.aspx>

9. **“Save evidence of bullying online”** If you are having a problem with someone online then you might think deleting the comments/images will make you feel better. But, if you do want to report the person - the best thing you can do is SAVE the evidence - screen shot the comments and save them somewhere safe.

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The table below explores the range of ways today’s technology can be used.

Technology	Great for:	Examples of misuse:
Mobile phone	Keeping in touch by voice or text, taking and sending pictures and film, listening to music, playing games, going online and sending emails. Useful in emergency situations and for allowing children a greater sense of independence.	Sending nasty calls or text messages, including threats, intimidation, and harassment. Taking and sharing humiliating images. Videoing other people being harassed and sending these to other phones or internet sites.
Instant messenger (IM)	Text or voice chatting live with friends online. A quick and effective way of keeping in touch even while working on other things.	Sending nasty messages or content. Using someone else’s account to forward rude or mean messages via their contacts list.
Chatrooms & message boards	Groups of people around the world can text or voice chat live about common interests. For young people, this can be an easy way to meet new people and explore issues which they are too shy to talk about in person.	Sending nasty or threatening anonymous messages. Groups of people deciding to pick on or ignore individuals. Making friends under false pretences – people pretending to be someone they’re not in order to get personal information that they can misuse in a range of ways – e.g. by spreading secrets or blackmailing.
Emails	Sending electronic letters, pictures and other files quickly and cheaply anywhere in the world.	Sending nasty or threatening messages. Forwarding unsuitable content including images and video clips, or sending computer viruses. Accessing someone else’s account, e.g. to forward personal emails or

		delete emails.
Webcams	Taking pictures or recording messages. Being able to see and talk to someone live on your computer screen. Bringing far-off places to life or video conferencing.	Making and sending inappropriate content. Persuading or threatening young people to act in inappropriate ways. Using inappropriate recordings to manipulate young people.
Social network Sites	Socialising with your friends and making new ones within online communities. Allowing young people to be creative online, even publishing online music. Personalising homepages and profiles, creating and uploading content.	Posting nasty comments, humiliating images / video. Accessing another person's account details and sending unpleasant messages, deleting information or making private information public. Groups of people picking on individuals by excluding them. Creating fake profiles to pretend to be someone else, e.g. to bully, harass or get the person into trouble.
Video hosting sites	Accessing useful educational, entertaining and original creative video content and uploading your own.	Posting embarrassing, humiliating film of someone
Virtual Learning Environment	School site, usually available from home and school, set up for tracking and recording student assignments, tests and activities, with message boards, chat and IM.	Posting inappropriate messages or images. Hacking into someone else's account to post inappropriate comments or delete schoolwork.
Gaming sites Consoles & Virtual worlds	Live text or voice chat during online gaming between players across the world, or on handheld consoles with people in the same local area. Virtual worlds let users design their own avatars – a figure that represents them in the virtual world.	Name-calling, making abusive / derogatory remarks. Players may pick on weaker or less experienced users, repeatedly killing their characters. Forwarding unwanted messages to other devices in the immediate vicinity.

EXPERT WEBSITES

[CEOP Think U Know](#)

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Childnet International](#)

[Safe Network E-Safety](#)

[Internet Watch Foundation](#)

[Anti Bullying Alliance](#)

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