



Online Safety FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the online dangers?

Some examples of online dangers include; Viruses & Hackers, Stalkers, Pornography, Financial Scams, and Racist and Hate Literature.

What can I do to keep my child safe?

As parents you can make a huge difference if you talk to your children about their Internet use. Make them aware of the dangers and make sure they understand the implications of what could happen.

What if I don't know much about the Internet?

Your continued involvement is the best way of keeping your child safe. You do not need to know everything about technology instead apply everyday parenting skills. You can always contact your service provider.

How do children make friends online?

It is easy to meet people and have conversations online. One of the most popular ways for children to communicate with others is through chat rooms, which allow you to have live conversations. Some chat rooms allow you to mix text based chatting with video and voice, using webcam and microphone.

What is chat?

Chat allows many people across the world to communicate directly by exchanging text, almost as if they were holding a conversation in a room with a group of people or on a one-to-one basis.

Individuals are not only able to send text messages to chat rooms but, in some cases also have the ability to communicate and be heard via head sets or through web cams.

As access to the internet has grown in recent years, online chat has become a huge social phenomenon both for adults and particularly against children and young people.

Is online Chat safe?

Initial contacts in chat rooms can move into other areas such as email, Instant Messaging or text messaging on a mobile phone.

It is possible to have a one-to-one conversation with someone also known as 'whispering'. This can be dangerous as you are leaving a conversation where everyone can see the conversation being typed into a private room where you are alone with a stranger. Getting a child on their own and building up a relationship, is exactly what a paedophile wants. So discourage your child from "whispering" with strangers.

Are some chat rooms safer than others?

Yes child-friendly chat rooms are safer generally, but remember the provider cannot guarantee 100% safety. Ensure your child is of suitable age and maturity, before allowing them to use chat rooms. You can save the addresses by clicking on 'Favourites' when you are on the Internet and only allow your child to use these.

What's the harm in making online friends?

It is vital that no personal information, including pictures, is given. Everyone online should be considered as strangers even though your child may actually consider them as a 'friend'. Most adults who want to exploit children might be using other identities to build trust in children and then persuade them to do inappropriate things or meet up with them.

What if my child wants to meet someone they meet online?

Meeting up with people is not a good idea, no matter how long your child has been chatting to them for. You simply don't know if they are who they say they are.

If your child is persistent and does want to meet up with someone, then there are a few very important rules to follow. The most important thing to remember is 'safety in numbers'. Never let your child go on their own. Instead a responsible adult you trust should go along with them.

Choose a place to meet carefully. Make sure it is somewhere busy like a shopping centre, or outside a shop on the high street. This will give them less opportunity to cause any hassle.

Finally, always know where your child is going and always have a way of contacting them. Allow them to take a mobile phone with them so that if anything happens your child will be able to call and ask for help. Remember to top up the mobile phone before hand.

What do I need to know about mobile phones?

Almost five million British children, some as young as five years old, will own a mobile phone by the end of this year. Are you up to date with the newest mobile technology?

- You can use some mobiles to visit websites, including chat rooms
- Some of them are a bit like having a portable PC; therefore giving you 24/7 access to the Internet at your finger tips
- The newest mobile phones let you take photos, make mini film clips and send them via email.

It is important you as parents educate your children on how to be responsible whilst using a mobile phone. Children need to think carefully before they send images of themselves or friends to others using a mobile phone. Digital images can be easily manipulated, put onto a website and sent to millions of people at the click of a button.

What if they hear something unpleasant?

Chat rooms usually offer the option to block messages from other users. Another option is to report any abusive behaviour by clicking an on-screen 'report button' or by phoning their customer services. Or your child could always leave the chat.