

Kid Smart



www.kidsmart.org.uk



keeping
up with your
child
on the
internet



**an internet safety guide
for parents and carers**

The Internet – It's A Real World Out There!

It can be a tough job keeping up to date with kids these days. Just when we thought we were doing OK and could use E-mail, along comes Chat, Instant Messaging and Texting. Suddenly we have a whole new language and new challenges for us parents, teachers and carers.

I'VE GOT IT OUT OF THE BOX...
WHAT DO I DO NOW?



This guide will help you understand the online safety issues and gives practical help as you talk to children about their internet use with these SMART Safety Tips.

But Kids Know More Than I Do!

Many adults can feel intimidated in using the Internet and are baffled by some of the terms and technology. While it is true that many children may have better technical skills than you, children still need advice and protection in using this new tool. After all, you can teach children the importance of wearing a seat belt in a car without understanding how the engine works!

WHAT'S THE
BEST SECURITY
DEVICE TO
USE ON THE
INTERNET?

YOUR
BRAIN.



So What Are The Dangers ?

The Internet is like bringing a city into your living room: there are the exciting places for children to go and enjoy but also lots of places where you wouldn't want children to go unsupervised.

The main dangers for children can be grouped into:

CONTACT - Potentially from someone online who may wish to harm them. Children must re-learn the "stranger=danger" rule in a new context and never give out personal details or meet alone with anyone they've contacted via the Internet.

CONTENT - Keep an eye on the material children are looking at and agree the ground rules about where children go and how they behave.

COMMERCIALISM - Aggressive online marketing which can invade a child's privacy. Encourage children not to fill out forms which ask for lots of personal details.

Can't I Just Use A Filter ?

Filtering software can help to block a lot of inappropriate material but they are not 100% effective and are no substitute for good adult supervision. Internet use at school is generally filtered, monitored and safe. But many children use the net at friends' homes, Internet cafes, libraries and youth clubs where there may be no filters and little supervision.

It's therefore important to help educate children about how to behave online and discuss problems which they may have. It helps to keep the computer in a communal room – not tucked away in a bedroom.



What About Mobile Phones ?

The issues about being careful online apply equally to mobile telephones. Already many mobiles and hand-held devices have Internet facilities on them. It is very important to encourage children not to give out their mobile numbers to strangers or people they cannot trust completely. Talk about the sort of text messages your children are receiving and sending.



Stick To The Positive

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST INTERNET DANGER?

THAT YOU'LL CONCENTRATE ON THE DANGERS AND FORGET THE BENEFITS.



Encourage children to stick to the fun and positive sites on the net that reinforce their interests. Just as you look out for good TV programmes for children, take the time to find the best and most useful websites for you and the children in your care.



Communicating The Issues

The following SMART tips have been written especially for younger children to remind them to be careful when using the Internet and communicating with people they don't know. Spend time discussing these issues with children and visit www.kidsmart.org.uk to see a fuller explanation.



SAFE – Staying safe involves being careful and not giving out your name, address, mobile phone number, school name or password to people online.



MEETING someone you have contacted in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your parent's/carer's permission, and then when they can be present.



ACCEPTING e-mails or opening files from people you don't really know or trust can get you into trouble - they may contain viruses or nasty messages.



REMEMBER someone online may be lying and not be who they say they are. If you feel uncomfortable when chatting or messaging end the conversation.



TELL your parent or carer if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.



A special leaflet for young people "Helping Your Parents Be Cool About The Internet" is also available.

Ring 028 37 414614

Further Advice & Resources

The following organisations provide support and advice:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:
email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Freephone: 0808 800 5000
Textphone: 0800 560566

ChildLine 24-hour Helpline:
Freephone: 0800 1111
Web: www.childline.org.uk

The Internet Watch Foundation:
Phone: 08456 008844
Web: www.iwf.org.uk

The Police Service Northern Ireland:
Phone: 028 90 650222 (for local contact)

or contact your local Social Services

Website Resources:

www.childnet-int.org

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidsmart.org.uk

www.there4me.com

www.wiseuptothenet.org

www.nch.org.uk/itok/

This leaflet has been produced by the
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This leaflet can be made available in
larger print on request.

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