10 tips to stay safe online

Pass our pointers on to your child to help keep them safe online. You can read through these with your child, or give them this sheet, depending on their age and what you think would be most helpful.

- Be careful talking to people you don't know and trust in real life – anyone can pretend to be a child online. If you do talk to people you don't know, don't tell them your personal information – such as your name, age, what street you live on, your school's name, or your location. If they ask for images or videos of yourself, say no, stop talking to them and report this to a trusted adult

- You need to be 13 years old to use most social media apps. If you do use them, keep your profiles private, to limit what others can see. Think carefully about what you share and with who – once you've shared an image, you can't control what the other person does with it. Remember, it's against the law to take, share or view sexual images of under-18s

- Use AI chatbots carefully – not everything they generate is real. They may also tell you to do things that could harm you or someone else. Don't give them your personal information or photos – they could be used to make fake images, or to bully or blackmail you

- Keep in mind that what you post online now could be seen by people in the future, like when you're trying to get a job when you're older

- If you see something upsetting, or you're bullied online, tell an adult you trust. Ask them to report it by following the instructions on the website, game or app – they'll probably need to select the 3 dots next to a post or comment

- When you read, listen to or watch the news online, think about where the information comes from, and if it could be made up or a hoax

- Look out for hoaxes and scams, like messages you're meant to forward on or ones that ask you for payment details or your password

- Be wary of schemes promising easy cash for receiving and transferring money – they're almost definitely criminal activity

- Watch out for loot boxes or other parts of games where you pay money to take a chance on getting a reward – you can end up spending lots of money on them

- Remember, people make their lives look more exciting and interesting online. People often edit their photos to make them look better, or make fake images with AI tools, so don't believe everything you see. This includes gang lifestyles – they're not as glamorous as they look

Don't feel confident talking to your child about online safety?

Read this advice from the NSPCC: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety

Further information

This factsheet was produced by The Key Safeguarding**: www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding**

- 'Top-selling mobile games break rules on loot boxes', BBC News
  https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c748ww9y9nno

- 'Chatbot 'encouraged teen to kill parents over screen time limit'', BBC News
  https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd605e48q1vo

- How to spot fake news, Childline *https://www.childline.org.uk/get-involved/articles/how-to-spot-fake-news/*

- Money mule and exploitation action plan, GOV.UK – Home Office
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/money-mule-action-plan/money-mule-and-financial-exploitation-action-plan-accessible

- County Lines Programme overview, GOV.UK – Home Office *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/county-lines-programme/county-lines-programme-overview*

- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people, GOV.UK – Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, UK Council for Internet Safety
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexting-in-schools-and-colleges