

e-safety:

Young People and ICT



Advice for parents and carers

Young people have been born into the 'digital age'. They use computers, mobile phones, video games consoles etc., as part of their everyday lives. They often seem 'expert' compared to parents! But, young people do not have the 'life experience' of adults and need your support. You can provide this by talking to your child about what they are doing.

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Benefits of using ICT at home

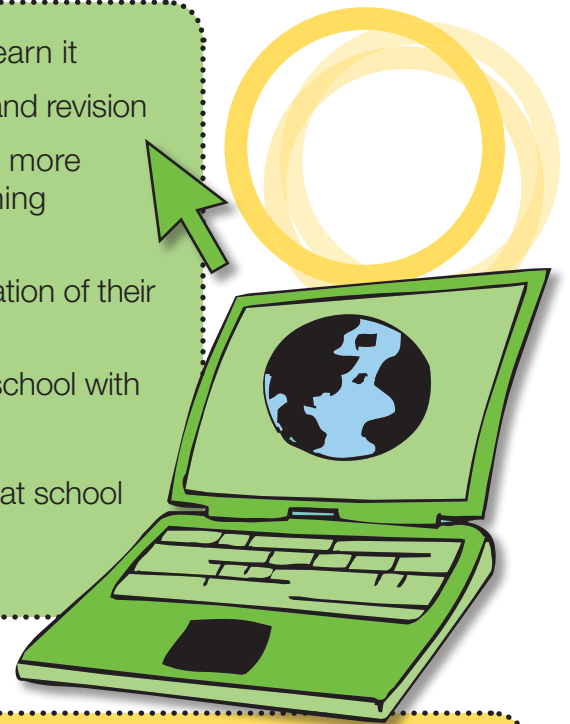
Many studies have found benefits of having access to a computer and/or the Internet at home. The benefits can include:

- improves students' achievement
- improves their ICT skills and makes learning more fun
- offers them choice in what they

learn and how they learn it

- supports homework and revision
- provides a wider and more flexible range of learning materials
- improves the presentation of their work
- connects learning at school with learning at home.

Using ICT at home and at school develops skills for life.



Using the Internet safely at home

Some useful 'rules' to keep young people safe:

- never give out any personal information about yourself, friends or family online including home address, phone or mobile number;
- never email your school name or a picture in school uniform (even to a friend);
- only use a webcam with people you really know 'off-line';
- don't use a webcam to do something that exposes you to danger or embarrassment;
- use websites recommended by teachers (your school will have a safe online managed learning environment for school/homework);
- avoid going to websites you could not tell your parents about;
- think about who has created a website and any possible bias within information;
- only email people you know;
- be careful before opening an email attachment sent by someone you don't know – if in doubt do not open, and delete it;
- be careful about 'pop-ups' that say you have won something;
- don't use your real name when using games or websites on the Internet, (create a nick name);
- where you are old enough to use social networking sites (usually 13yrs+), know how to keep your profile private;
- use Internet chat rooms, online game-sharing spaces, instant messaging etc., with caution and know how to block and report unwanted users;
- be aware that comments you make on message boards, Blogs, Wikis etc., can be viewed by others;
- never arrange to meet anyone alone, always tell an adult first and meet in a public place;
- tell an adult you trust immediately if you encounter anything you are unhappy with;
- report concerns using the report abuse button which can be found on many sites.

Using these rules

Go through the useful rules with your child. Talk to them regularly about what they are doing. Build a relationship of mutual respect as far as the Internet is concerned.



Develop Internet 'skills'

Swimming pools can be dangerous places, so we teach children to swim. Crossing the road can be dangerous, so we teach children road safety skills. We do not stop young people from swimming or crossing roads! So too, we must teach them how to be safe online so they can have fun, enjoy creative aspects and benefit from the learning opportunities. We must however still be aware of danger signs so we can deal with them.



Danger signs you should look out for



If your child is:

- using the computer in an excessive way
- staying online through the night
- being secretive about what they are doing.

These signs may be perfectly innocent of course, so talk to your daughter or son.



Danger signs your child should know about

- If a person tries various ways to get you to tell them your address or phone number
- If a person wants to keep their chats with you secret
- If a person shares information with you and tells you not to tell anyone else about it
- If a person emails you pictures which make you feel uncomfortable and which you would not want to show to anyone else
- If a person wants you to email them pictures of yourself or use a webcam in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable
- If a person tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell an adult what has been going on.



Put in sensible 'technical' solutions

Many Internet Service Providers offer filtering systems and parental control tools to help you safeguard your child at home. Find out how these work.

Develop trust

However, it remains surprisingly easy for young people to access inappropriate material including unsuitable text, pictures and movies. So, develop trust. It is most important that your child feels able to tell you if they find something inappropriate or they get inappropriate attention from someone.

Use the school online learning environment

Your school may have a Managed Learning Environment in-place (such as the London

MLE) – which provides a 'safe' online learning space. Teachers create the materials, check the links and use recommended resources.

Put the computer in a family room

With younger students, it is a good idea to locate the computer in a family area, not a bedroom, so you can better supervise them.

Use age-appropriate 'tools'

Mobile phones, games consoles and other devices can often also access the Internet. So, consider this and check they use age-appropriate games. With younger students, to help them do other things online, 'bookmark' child friendly sites or search engines for them to use, such as:

Ask Jeeves: www.askkids.com

Yahoo! Kids: www.kids.yahoo.com

Some useful websites for parents

Child-net International: www.childnet-int.org/kia/parents

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

MyGuide: www.myguide.gov.uk

Parents Centre: www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet



If you have concerns

- Talk to your child's school
- Report abuse using the national 'Report Abuse' link.



This takes you to a site managed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) www.ceop.gov.uk.

