

# HELPING YOUR CHILD STAY SAFE ONLINE

A simple guide for parents and carers



## WHY THIS MATTERS

Children spend time online to:

- Learn
- Play
- Talk to friends
- Be creative

The online world is an important part of their lives, but it also has risks.

**The most important thing you can do is keep talking to your child.**

1

## WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT PARENTS TO KNOW

Young people told us they want parents to:

- Listen** without judging.
- Stay calm** if something goes wrong.
- Explain** the reasons for rules.
- Be interested** in the apps they use.
- Talk regularly** instead of only when there is a problem.
- Set clear boundaries.**

### IDEAS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

- ✓ No phones at the dinner table.
- ✓ No phones in bedrooms overnight.
- ✓ Have regular phone-free family time.
- ✓ Explain why you are using your own phone.
- ✓ Review the rules as children get older.



**They are less likely to ask for help if they think their phone will be taken away.**

### SIMPLE RULES THAT HELP

Agree family rules together and explain why they matter.

Rules should cover:

- how long they spend on devices
- what they are doing online

2

## WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Children told us they often keep problems to themselves because they worry adults will overreact.

Try to:

- Stay calm.
- Listen first.
- Reassure your child.
- Help them report harmful content if needed.
- Agree in advance when a phone might need to be taken away and explain why.



## SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY NEED SUPPORT

Changes may include:

- Becoming withdrawn
- Mood changes
- Less interest in hobbies
- Being unusually anxious
- Poor sleep
- Falling behind at school
- Keeping more secrets

These changes can happen for many reasons, but online experiences may be one of them.

3

## TALKING ABOUT AI

AI is now part of everyday life.

Children use it for:

- homework
- finding information
- creativity
- entertainment



### ASK YOUR CHILD:

- Which AI tools do you use?
- Can you show me how they work?
- How do you know if the information is true?

Encourage children to check information rather than believing everything AI says.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What did you enjoy online today?
- Can you show me your favourite app?
- What worries you about being online?
- Who would you talk to if something upset you online?
- Do you think our family rules are fair?

### REMEMBER

Young people said they want parents to:

**Be kind. Be firm. Explain decisions. Keep talking. Trust their instincts.**

Creating an open, honest relationship before something goes wrong makes it easier for children to ask for help.

## WHERE TO GET HELP

If you need support, the guide recommends:

Childline • NSPCC • CEOP • Thinkuknow  
Childnet • Family Lives • Parent Talk • Report Harmful Content

4