O2 NSPCC

Let's keep kids safe online

A parents' guide to being Share Aware

Helping you to keep your child safe online

We tell children it's good to share, but online it's different. That's why we're asking parents to be Share Aware.

Help keep children safe online

We know some parents feel confused by the internet. It's constantly changing, and it can be hard to keep up with the latest apps and trends. It can be particularly tricky for parents of children aged 8-12. That's the age when children start doing more online, becoming more independent and using different devices.

So, we've put together this guide. To reassure you, and give you the information and advice you'll need to keep your child safe online. The internet's an amazing place, so we want to help your child to get the most out of it, and to do that safely.

The guidance is actually really simple - it's all about talking to your child, getting the family involved, and finding out what you can do.

One of the easiest – and most effective – things you can do is simply talk to your child.

Talk to your child

Help your child think about who sees what they share, and compare it to what they would be happy to share offline. Use examples that are easy for them to understand: "You wouldn't give your phone number to a stranger on the street. Is a stranger online any different?"

Explain how everything they share online – like usernames, images and comments – builds up a picture of who they are.

Visit **nspcc.org.uk** for more great advice on how to start a conversation with your child.

Talking points

- What's 'personal information' and why's it important? (emails, name, phone number, school names etc.)
- Not everyone's who they say they are online – be careful sharing thoughts and feelings with people you've only met online.
- Choose usernames that don't reveal personal information.
- What images and photos might be OK to share?
- Think about what you share with friends. Once it's online, it's out of your control.

Things to do

- Find sites and apps you think are suitable and check them out with your child. Net Aware – our guide to the social networks children use – is a great place to start.
- Break your Share Aware conversations into smaller chunks – your child will find it much easier to take it all in.
- Go over points you've spoken about before to make sure your child understands.

Helping your child to take control is great, but there are really useful things you can do as a family too.

Get the family involved

To start with, you'll probably find it useful to agree on some ground rules together. These rules don't have to be set in stone. Regularly review what you've agreed, and take your child's wishes, development and maturity into account.

Remember that you can back up what you've decided by using technical tools like parental controls and filters. You can find out more on **nspcc.org.uk**

Each family will have their own approach – the important thing is working out what's right for you.

Talking points

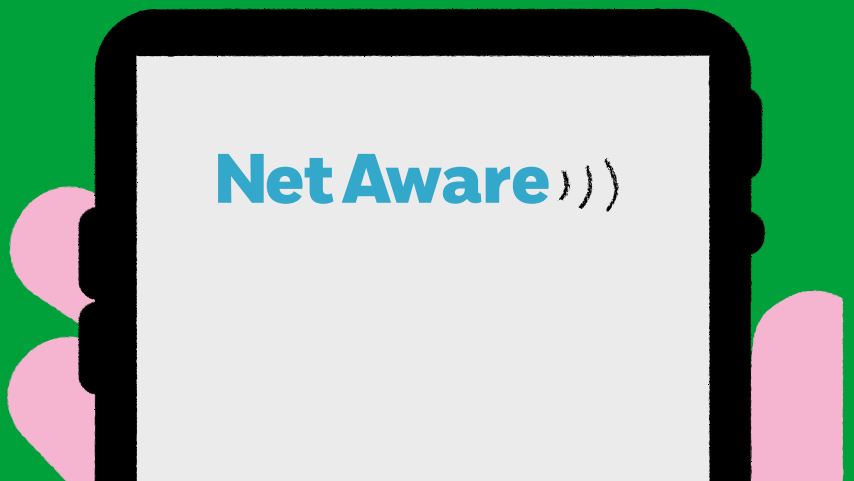
- Which sites and apps can be used and by who?
- When is it/isn't it OK to use the internet? Meal times, bedtime, family visits?
- Do your children have to ask for permission to download games, apps, or spend money online?
- What parental controls will you use, and when and how will you use them?

Things to do

- Have a healthy family debate and listen to your child's point of view.
- Set boundaries. Younger children respond well to boundaries. They understand rules are there for a reason – often to keep them safe.
- Be positive about the benefits of the internet and take a balanced approach.
- Regularly review what you've agreed. The rules set one year may need changing the next – it's good to make sure your child isn't being left behind.
- Talk about privacy settings, and how they help your child control who can see what they share. Our Net Aware tool will help.

As a parent, there's plenty you can do to keep your child safe online.

Safety starts with you



The online world can feel daunting. But there are lots of things you can do to take back control; whether it's installing the latest filters or keeping up to date with new apps.

You can also help your child by simply setting a good example online. It might not always feel like it, but your child does notice how you act and follow your lead. So it's important to show them what safe sharing looks like.

Use our Net Aware tool to stay up to date with the latest apps, websites and games your child uses.

net-aware.org.uk

Talking points

- If you use parental controls, talk to your child about them. Explain that you're using the controls to keep them safe.
- Talk to your child about how to report things on websites, and how to block content or people if they need to.

Things to do

- Call the O2 and NSPCC online safety helpline on **0808 800 5002**. For advice and support on setting up parental controls, adjusting privacy settings, understanding social networks and more.
- Think before you share. You might think it's endearing or funny to share pictures or comments about your child, but would they?
- Think about whether it's OK for your child to see what you've been viewing. Clear browser histories and cookies, to avoid your child seeing unsuitable content.
- Don't forget that news websites can show content that might upset your child. Take the same approach as you would with news on TV and in the papers.

From time to time things can go wrong online. We know it can be worrying, but we can help.

Your child might have 'overshared' – shared too much information about themselves – or someone might have shared some content with them that you'd rather they hadn't seen. Whatever has happened, there will always be something you can do to make it better.

If things go wrong

Steps you can take

- Reassure your child – they may be very upset, and need help to make sense of what has happened.
- Ask your child exactly what happened and if anyone else was involved, but stay calm and don't rush them.
- If your child sees something online that they think they shouldn't have seen, let them know it's not necessarily their fault – they shouldn't feel guilty, and they can always talk to you.

Getting extra support

- Many social networks, like Facebook and YouTube provide ways to report offensive content or behaviour. The links to these pages can be found on Net Aware.
- If you think your own child or any other is at immediate risk because of what they have shared or seen, contact the police or the NSPCC for advice on **0808 800 5000**.
- CEOP helps keep children safe from online grooming and sexual exploitation. If someone's acted inappropriately to a child or young person, you can report it to CEOP.

What your child can do

- Talk about what your child should do if something or someone upsets them online. You might want to agree that they tell you, or another adult you both trust.
- Help your child to check the privacy settings on the sites, apps, games and devices they use, to make sure their personal information isn't available to everyone.
- Your child can contact Childline if they need further support by calling **0800 1111** or visiting **childline.org.uk** Childline can also help with taking an illegal image off the internet, by making a report to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) on their behalf.

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If you're worried about a child, you can contact the NSPCC helpline for advice and support.

So, there you have it – your guide to keeping your child safe online. Just remember:

- ✓ Talk to your child
- ✓ Get the family involved
- ✓ Safety starts with you

You can also use our handy Net Aware tool to explore what sites, apps and games are right for your child. net-aware.org.uk

✳ For advice and support on setting up parental controls, adjusting privacy settings, understanding social networks and more – call the O2 and NSPCC online safety helpline.

0808 800 5002

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