

E-safety Factsheet for Parents

Positive and Negative Aspects of the Internet:

Positive aspects of the internet:

- Great for research
- Cheap or free communication and collaboration
- Easy to create and publish content and get it noticed
- Great for children to develop future job skills as fun hobbies
- Introduces children to the world of commerce and business
- Encourages creativity and individualism
- Children feel they have 'ownership' of the internet

Negative aspects of the internet:

- Cyber bullying
- Online privacy and personal information
- Reputation management and 'digital footprint'
- Sexting, grooming, pornography and inappropriate material
- Illegal downloads and copyright infringement
- Spam, phishing, viruses and malware
- Children lying about their age to get onto social networking platforms with a 13+ age limit

The positives need to outweigh the negatives in e-safety education:

The best outcome regarding e-safety incidents, cyberbullying and online harassment with school-aged children is always to persuade the pupils to see the consequences of their actions and remove the material of their own accord.

Much better outcomes are seen when children decide for themselves what is and is not appropriate and self-regulate their actions. Schools and parents have a huge role to play in providing this guidance first, rather than imposing rigid rules and sanctions as an initial measure.

Minimum age limits:

Many social networking platforms – especially Facebook – have minimum age limits (for Facebook, for example, it's 13) and built-in child protection features which are only activated for children aged 13-16. If the child claims they are, say, 21, these features are switched off. **It is crucial that children do not lie about their age.**

Under these child protection features, harassment and bullying reports go to the top of the queue for 13 to 16-year-olds and material is more likely to be deleted by Facebook. Also, uninitiated contact by an adult who has no friends in common or other connections to a child will be automatically flagged by Facebook, and all chat, posts and messages will be monitored for an unspecified period – possibly up to six months. If there's anything of concern it will get forwarded by Facebook to law enforcement. However, this only happens if the child is between 13 and 16 and has provided their correct age.

Statistics:

Usage:

- 91% of all 5 to 15-year-olds used the internet in 2012. This breaks down by age as: three in four 5 to 7-year-olds (74%), nearly all 8 to 11-year-olds (95%) and all 12 to 15-year-olds (100%). (Source: Ofcom)
- 93% of children aged 11+ use a computer and mobile phone every day. (Source: Childnet)
- Facebook has over 800 million registered users. (Source: Facebook)
- The average person on Facebook has 130 friends. (Source: Facebook)
- The average child on Facebook aged between 13 and 16 has 300 friends. (Source: Submit)
- There are over 80 billion searches on Google each month. (Source: Google)
- There are over 15 billion Twitter interactions each month. (Source: Twitter)
- The number of text messages sent each day exceeds the population of the planet. (Source: Childnet)

Time spent on the internet:

- The estimated weekly time spent using the internet at home in 2012 increased with the age of the child: 6 hours for 5 to 7-year-olds, 8.1 hours for 8 to 11-year-olds and 17.1 hours for 12 to 15-year-olds. (Source: Ofcom)
- In 2012, 12 to 15-year-olds spent as much time using the internet as watching television. (Source: Ofcom)
- 40% of all 5 to 15-year-olds used a social networking site at least once a week in 2012. This breaks down by age as: 3% of 5 to 7-year-olds, 19% of 8 to 11-year-olds and 75% of 12 to 15-year-olds. (Source: Ofcom)

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Children and social networking:

- 43% of children aged 5 to 15 years old have a profile on a social networking site, such as Facebook (2% of 5 to 7-year-olds, 22% of 8 to 11-year-olds and 80% of 12 to 15-year-olds). (Source: Ofcom 2012)
- 98% of 8 to 11-year-olds and 12 to 15-year-olds who have a social networking site profile use Facebook (despite the minimum age being 13). (Source: Ofcom)
- 75% of 8 to 15-year-olds lie about their age when signing up to Facebook. 50% of parents are aware of this. (Source: Stop web bullying).

Internet safety issues:

- 79% of children use the internet at home unsupervised. (Source: Childnet)
- 69% of young people say they don't like their parents checking up on their online activities. (Source: Childnet)
- 49% of young people claim they have given private information to someone they have met online. (Source: NCH)
- 31% of 9 to 18-year-olds who use the internet at least once a week have received unwanted sexual or nasty comments. (Source: NCH)
- 57% of child internet users have come into contact with online pornography. (Source: NCH)
- 1 in 12 children have met face-to-face with someone they first met online. (Source: NCH)

Advertising and information:

- 40% of 9 to 18-year-olds trust most of the information on the internet. (Source: NCH)
- 8 to 11-year-olds (70%) are more likely than 12 to 15-year-olds (48%) to believe that the information on sites such as Wikipedia is all or mostly true. (Source: Ofcom)
- 73% of online adverts are not clearly labelled as such. (Source: Childnet)

Key tips:

- Know what your children are doing online.
- Be aware who your children are talking to online.
- Keep computer and internet access in a shared family room.
- Explain why your children should not give out personal details online
- Explain to your child that nothing is private on the internet – anything can be copied, whether it be private pictures, comments or messages.
- Point out that your child should always consider what an employer or partner might be able to find about them on Google in 5 to 10 years' time.
- Avoid replying to junk, spam or phishing emails, or opening attachments which might contain viruses or malware.
- Teach your children to be sceptical about information they read online.
- Ensure your child does not meet up with online friends unless accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Creating a positive environment where your child can be open and inquisitive and feel confident discussing their online experiences, whether positive or negative.
- Teach your children how to block and report any behaviour or content which makes them feel uncomfortable.

Useful links:

- <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis/>
- <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- <http://www.getnetwise.org/>
- <http://www.e-safetysupport.com/>