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THE LINGO?



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An Internet Safety Guide for Parents

The internet contains the good, the bad and everything in between. As adults, many of us have the tendency to assume children know how to behave, but in fact they can be very vulnerable online, lacking the savvy needed to stay secure and steer clear of danger.

A particular cause for concern is the growing divide between parents and children when it comes to knowledge of the internet and the slang terms associated with it. Very often it's vulnerable children who are keeping up with changing technology and 'cyber slang', leaving parents lagging behind. But for parents, understanding the technology and slang their children are using is essential when it comes to spotting the risks to which kids are exposed online.

We've put together this common sense guide to help you learn more about internet lingo and equip you to spot online risks, putting you in a better position to identify potential risks and talk effectively about them with your children. Without this knowledge, you're far less equipped to understand what your kids are getting up to when they're sitting on the computer for hours at a time, and far less able to protect them from the very real threats, such as reputation damage and online predators, posed by the internet.

This guide is designed to reveal the main issues children face online, help you spot these risks and set your own boundaries, as well as explaining what to do if you think your child is at risk.

We have also included a quick reference guide for children in a clear Q and A format, so they'll know what to do in a variety of common circumstances, plus a resource list to point you in the right direction for more fine detail, support and specialist advice.

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Some useful statistics*

- 58% of youngsters admit someone has said hurtful things to them online.
- More than 80% of teenagers use a mobile, and it's the commonest way to carry out bullying.
- 68% of teenagers realise cyberbullying is a problem and 81% feel it's easier to get away with online.
- Only 1 in 10 victims will tell an adult about online abuse.
- Anywhere between 20% and 75% of children have been bullied online, depending on which study you read. Some research reveals that one in four have experienced it more than once.
- 70% of students say they regularly see online bullying going on.
- 90% of teens who have come across cyberbullying ignore it.
- Girls are twice as likely to get involved in cyberbullying as boys.
- 75% or so of students have visited a website saying nasty things about a fellow student.
- People who are bullied are anywhere between twice and nine times more likely to think about suicide.

* From EndCyberBullying.org, StopCyberBullying.org, InternetSafety101.org and StompOutBullying.com

A parents' guide to netspeak

81% of teenagers use netspeak, according to our recent survey. Older teens, between 13 and 18 years of age, use it most. The top three reasons why the teenagers surveyed use it are because it's quicker to type or text (86%), because it's what their friends use (41%) and because it's 'cool' (25%). And 12% said they use text speak because it's the way they tend to speak.

If you want to know what your children are doing online, you need to know what they're talking about. Netspeak, where you abbreviate sentences and statements, is constantly evolving. Here are the most popular terms.

143	I love you	Noob	Newbie – often an insult
ASL(R/P)	Age sex location (race/picture)	NMU	Not much, you?
BF / GF	Boyfriend / girlfriend	OH	Overheard
BRB	Be Right Back	OMG	Oh my God
BYKT	But you knew that	ORLY	Oh, really?
CD9 (Code 9)	My parents are around	P911	Parent emergency
CSL	Can't stop laughing	PAW	Parents are watching
F2F or FTF	Face to face	PIR	Parent in room
FTL	For the loss / For the lose	POS	Parent over shoulder
FTW	For the win	PRON	Porn
FWB	Friends with benefits	PRW	Parents are watching
FWIW	For what it's worth	QQ	Crying
FYEO	For your eyes only	RUOK	Are you okay?
GNOC	Get naked on camera	S2R	Send to receive pictures
GTG	Got to go	SWAK	Sealed with a kiss
IDK	I don't know	SWYP	So, what's your problem?
ILY / ILU	I love you	TDTM	Talk dirty to me
(L)MIRL	(Let's) meet in real life	VSF	Very sad face
LOL	Laugh out loud	Warez	Pirate software
MorF	Male or female	W/E	Whatever
MOS	Mum over shoulder	WTPA	Where the party at?
NIFOC	Naked in front of computer	ZOMG	Oh my god (sarcastic)

If you see something you don't recognise in this list, you can use the NoSlang internet slang translator tool to decode it: <http://www.noslang.com/>. Or ask your child.

A guide to the main internet dangers faced by children

Kids face three main dangers online: cyberbullying, damage to their reputations, and online sexual predators. Here are some facts:

- **Cyberbullying** – A study by the charity Beatbullying and the National Association of Head Teachers¹ found that 28% of 11 to 16 year olds had experienced mobile phone or internet bullying.
- **Damaged reputations** – Children are very sensitive about the way other people see them, and a damaged reputation can cause them real distress. Young people are less aware of the consequences of their actions, which makes it a common cyberbullying-related problem.
- **Online sexual predators** – In 2012, there were 1,145 reported incidents of online grooming². 7% of them included attempts to meet a child offline, down from 12% in 2011.

Many parents aren't as internet savvy as they could be. A recent piece of research by Knowthenet revealed that just 30% of parents of 10-18 year olds accurately identified definitions of six popular netspeak terms, including LMIRL, 'frape', YOLO, ASL and trolling. Mums are more savvy than dads, with 32% of women choosing the correct definitions compared with 29% of men.

At the same time, Knowthenet's research highlighted how a significant proportion of 10-18 year olds are involved with online misdemeanours. 32% have downloaded illegal content, 30% have posted on a friend's social network profile without permission, and 20% have been mean to others online. Older teens, aged 16-18, are more likely to download illegal content and post on a friend's social network profile without permission as compared to those aged 10-12.

Section Resources:

- 1 <http://archive.beatbullying.org/dox/media-centre/press-releases/Feb%202012/Virtual-Violence-II-The-Real-Impact-Of-Cyberbullying.html>
- 2 <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2013/ALARMING-NEW-TREND-IN-ONLINE-SEXUAL-ABUSE/>



TALK
TO YOUR
CHILDREN

About cyberbullying and reputation damage

What is it?

Cyberbullying³ includes reputation damage. It's just the same as offline bullying, except it's even more cowardly, because it's often anonymous. It can be one-on-one or involve groups against an individual child. Children tease each other about their looks, the way they speak, what they wear, their hair, attitude and taste... the list goes on. Sometimes they do it for no reason at all except that a particular child has caught their attention. Sometimes youngsters will spread rumours online, damaging a child's reputation, leaving them feeling vulnerable, embarrassed, powerless, unhappy and angry.

Netspeak terms to watch out for

You can help by learning and understanding some of the netspeak terms that may indicate that your child is being bullied online:

- Noob – this refers to a new member of a forum or community, and is often used as an insult.
- Frape – this occurs when someone updates another person's social network profile without their permission, sometimes posting defamatory or insulting remarks. If you hear your child say they've been 'fraped', investigate further.
- QQ – this means that the person typing it is crying. If you see your child writing this in an online conversation, but they seem fine when they talk to you, try and find out what's upsetting them.

What are the warning signs to look for?

If your bubbly, confident child becomes secretive, anxious, depressed, quiet and withdrawn, can't sleep or has bad dreams – or you notice their social life isn't as lively as it used to be – they might be being bullied. Look out for:

- Nerves when texts or emails arrive
- Reluctance to leave the house or be sociable
- Anger or frustration after being online
- Reluctance to talk about their online life
- Trouble with school work and problems concentrating
- Lost appetite or trouble sleeping

Some children like to talk about their lives, others don't. But they might tell you themselves, showing you an upsetting text or social network message.

How to talk about it?

The most important thing is to open clear lines of communication so they feel they can talk to you calmly and honestly.

The practical side

Many schools have protocols for dealing with cyberbullying. Talking to teachers can help, but take cues from your child – they are often very worried about ‘telling tales’. Let your child know what you’re going to do, and if they are concerned, make sure the matter is handled privately.

You can ‘block the bully’; most devices let you block emails, IMs and texts from people your child doesn’t want to communicate with.

It also helps to cut the time they spend online, so they don’t become obsessed with their problems, unable to resist finding out what people are saying. Some smartphone providers let you turn off text messaging during certain hours and most include parental controls, as do desktops and laptops.

It’s a good idea to know what you are dealing with, which means knowing about your child’s online world. You can check what they post on social networks, monitor which sites they visit and generally be aware of what’s going on. It helps to make their online life a topic of everyday conversation.

The emotional side

Being bullied often has a negative effect on a child’s confidence and self-worth, giving them a nasty knock. It’s good to boost their confidence in every way you can so that they feel stronger in themselves and better able to cope.

What to tell your children?

You remember school. You might have been bullied, or bullied someone yourself, or you might have stood on the sidelines while other people did the bullying. Think back to how you felt. It’s difficult to put yourself in a child’s shoes, but talking about your own experiences can help. In fact, the very act of talking about a problem helps, as does knowing they’re not alone. And it also helps to know there are plenty of practical things that can be done to nip it in the bud.

What if they are at that rebellious age where everything you say is wrong? When advice won’t work, facts and information can come in handy.

Links to useful resources

- US site Cyberbullying.us provides research, stories, cases, downloads, fact sheets, tips, strategies, news, a blog and more.
- www.stopcyberbullying.org has a fun quiz where your kids can rate their own online behaviour, plus there's all sorts of useful information about why some people cyberbully, and how to stop yourself from doing it.
- www.wiredsafety.com talks about what to do if you are being cyberbullied.
- www.stopbullyingnow.com includes loads of excellent information about what you can do to stop online bullying.
- [The Knowthenet Knowledge Centre](http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/knowledge-centre/) (<http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/knowledge-centre/>) has a number of useful articles about cyberbullying and how you can put a stop to it.

Section Resource:

3 <http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/knowledge-centre/cyberbullying>

About online sexual predators

What is it?

Online sexual predators are people who try to 'groom' children over the internet, which means nurturing an online relationship to such a stage that they can persuade the child to meet them in person.

Netspeak terms to watch out for

Here are some of the netspeak terms to watch out for that may indicate that your child is being groomed by a stranger they've met online.

- LMIRL – Let's Meet in Real Life. If you spot this in your child's online conversations, talk to them about it immediately.
- GNOC – Get Naked on Camera. If you see someone use this term in conversation with your child, block them and report them to the social network immediately, and report it to the police on the non-emergency 101 number.
- FWB – Friends With Benefits. This could indicate that someone is trying to form an inappropriate relationship with your child, and depending on their age, could be an indication of something far more sinister. In the first instance, talk to your child and find out more.
- ASL – Age, Sex, Location. Teach your children never to reveal any personally identifying information about themselves (such as their address), and if you see someone asking your child for this information, talk to your child about it immediately and find out more about who they're talking to.

What are the warning signs to look for?

- Secretiveness and unwillingness to talk about what they're up to on the computer.
- Long hours spent in their room online.
- Suddenly turning off the machine whenever you walk by.
- The netspeak abbreviation 'LMIRL', which stands for 'Let's Meet in Real Life'. If you spot this in your child's online conversations, talk to them about it immediately.

It's also a good idea to be familiar with your child's friends and contacts so that you can spot anything that looks suspicious.

What to tell your children?

As a parent it's entirely up to you how much you tell your child about this sensitive subject. You know your child best. As a general rule, knowledge is a useful tool – when children know the dangers, how to avoid them and how to deal with them if they happen, they can act to keep themselves and their friends safe.

How to talk about it?

Talking about relationships and sex can be embarrassing for teens and impossible for little children to understand. You might want to make general internet safety into a family discussion. Being open about things shows children they can talk about their feelings and experiences without getting into trouble. Depending on their age, it might help to focus on the practical side of the things they can do to stay safe online in general, without frightening them.

Links to useful resources

- [Get Safe Online](http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/knowledge-centre/online-safety) (http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/knowledge-centre/online-safety) – Plenty of expert advice on all aspects of internet safety
- [Wise Kids](http://www.wisekids.org.uk/) (http://www.wisekids.org.uk/) – Promoting safe internet use.
- [Childnet International](http://www.childnet.com/) (http://www.childnet.com/) – A non-profit organisation working to make the internet a fun, safe place for children.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/) (http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/) - Tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe on the internet.

How to speak to your children about internet dangers...

... and what boundaries to set

Obviously you don't want to frighten your children or put them off the internet altogether. But you'd like to give them a solid foundation in how to stay safe and secure online, so they can enjoy it fully with as little risk as possible. You know your child better than anyone, so you will probably know which approach will work best. But here are some common sense ideas.

- Young children learn really well through play, so you could turn the learning process into a game.
- Teen friends might enjoy getting together in someone's house and having a lively, noisy, fun debate about it, mediated by a parent who knows their internet onions.
- You might be the kind of family who sits around the dinner table and debates life, the universe and everything, in which case it's a great subject for discussion.
- There's a huge amount of information online. Try Saferinternet.org for a start, which includes resources for parents and teachers. Learning together in bite-sized chunks means you can learn to enjoy the net as a family, embedding safety into everything you do online so firmly that you eventually do it without thinking.

Practical steps to protect your children

Talk to your kids about their online lives so that it becomes a part of everyday conversation. That way you'll get a 'flavour' of the norm and be able to notice suspicious variations. It helps if you know the lingo, so check out the netspeak guide we've included at the beginning of this guide.

Get involved

It's a good idea to set up social media accounts for yourself, as it will help you become familiar with the different security settings and the way the networks themselves work.

Parental controls

Parental controls are handy, letting you limit the sites and the kind of online content your children can see at operating system level, for example in Windows, and through browsers such as Google Chrome.

Security and privacy settings

Check the security and privacy settings on all the devices your child has access to, using the internet to find instructions if you don't have the printed ones.

Ask an expert

If you're an internet novice, you could get a computer expert to set everything up safely and securely for you so it's done, then learn how everything works at your leisure.

Nicknames

Make sure your children use a nickname or their first name, not their full name, to protect their identity from strangers. Don't let them use nicknames that could be taken the wrong way, for example teen sweetie pie. And teach them to keep their friends' private information safe, too.

Watch out for personally identifying information

Keep an eye open in case your child posts information online that could identify them, especially through public groups such as school Facebook groups. As a rule, it's best not to reveal their school, your workplace, their address or phone number, or anything else that can leave them vulnerable to cyberbullying and internet predators.

Ask the kids

Ask your children for help if they're more tech savvy than you. If they're teens, you might even try incentivising the process to get their buy-in. Pay them for teaching you how to make the internet safer for the whole family.

House rules

Establish internet use rules, setting out clearly when, how often and how they are allowed to use social networking sites.

Age limits

Make sure they obey age limits. You usually need to be at least 13 to set up a social media profile, and because children don't always play by the rules, you can't really expect the networks themselves to take responsibility.

Smartphones and unsecured networks

If your children carry smartphones around with them, can you configure them so they can't access public networks, or only access secured ones? If not, make sure both you and they know about the risks of leaving all their personal information open for criminals to steal. Here's a link to advice about staying safe on public wifi networks: <http://lifehacker.com/5576927/how-to-stay-safe-on-public-wi+fi-networks>.

Move the computer

It depends on your child, but you might want to move their computer into a family room to keep an eye open in case they run into trouble.

Use of images

Take care with photos. Teach your child that images including street signs, registration plates on their parents' cars or their school uniform can put them at risk.

Log off

Teach them to log off properly if they ever use public internet access. Or forbid it, just in case they leave their accounts open for everyone to see.

When you're out

What if you aren't around? Give your children a guide so that they know what to do when they're home alone or out and about with friends.

School guidance

Does your school provide internet safety guidance for kids? If not, perhaps you could make it happen.

Contact the social network

If your children won't follow the rules, you can protect their safety by contacting the social network and asking them to take down their page or close their account.

What if *your* child is the bully?

Our survey revealed that 20% of teenagers admit to having been mean to someone online. So what should you do if it's your child who's doing the bullying?

Some bullies are being bullied by others. Others are shy, underdogs or underachievers. But most of the time they're just children who have taken a wrong turn, and they often don't know how to get out of it. Bullying doesn't make bullies feel better, it enhances their unhappiness. They might be acting out their frustrations, flexing their wings to see how much power they have, experimenting, or feeling bad about themselves and taking it out on others. Whatever the reason, it's an unpleasant experience for everyone concerned.

Your child will probably be horrified to be found out, ashamed and embarrassed. They know deep inside that this kind of behaviour isn't acceptable. Teenagers' brains haven't fully developed, and their ability to empathise and put themselves in other people's shoes is limited, as is their understanding that actions have consequences. So it's not 100% bad – it's actually partially biological.

How can you help your child extract themselves from the situation? Get them to talk about why they felt the need to bully people. You might find that they haven't thought about it in any depth, and thinking it through might be enough to stop the cycle.

Is there something going on at home that makes your child unhappy? Bullying might be an external manifestation of an internal problem, and talking things through can help get to the bottom of it, adding a valuable adult perspective. They might even have got into the wrong crowd, getting trapped amongst a group of bullies and being stuck there because of peer pressure or the fear of losing friends.

They might have no idea why they're doing it. It's possible, since teens aren't as good as adults at introspection. It helps to explain why what they have been doing is wrong, then ask them to stop the bullying and encourage them to apologise.

How do you know?

Although 53% of the teens surveyed by Knowthenet said they would turn to their parents if they got into trouble because of their online activity, younger children are more likely to seek help from mum or dad: 75% of 10-12 year olds. 51% of teens between 16-18 are likely to turn to a friend in times of need, and just one in ten would ask a brother or sister for help. But there are signs to look out for. Your child might change screens or close programs when you come near. They might be at their screen all day and night, unable to leave it alone. They may be reluctant to talk about their online life. They might even have multiple accounts with social networks, been involved in real-life bullying before or been bullied themselves.

Who to contact if you have concerns

Let's say you've used your new-found knowledge of netspeak and other digital issues to gain a better understanding of what your child is up to online, and you've discovered that they're the victim of an online bully. What should you do? If your child is being bullied online, try contacting the administrator of the site in question. They will be used to getting requests to act against cyberbullies and they should respond quickly. If it doesn't work and your child is still being bullied, you can contact the hosting company.

Most cyberbullying is done through a child's social scene, for example their school or social group. You can contact the school if they're being bullied online by schoolmates, but as we've mentioned, it helps to take your child's feelings into account.

If your child is being exposed to inappropriate advertising or other content through a social network or other community, you can ask to have the content taken down. If there's inappropriate advertising or content on a children's website, you can contact the site owner, or if that doesn't work and it's a UK website, get in touch with [Trading Standards](#)⁴.

If an ordinary search results in an inappropriate website popping up, you can contact the search engine and ask them to re-classify it. Here's a link to advice from [Google](#)⁵, the search engine used by more than 90% of us in Britain.

If you think a paedophile might be communicating with your child, or they're being stalked or harassed, contact the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#)⁶ or your local police. You can also visit [thinkuknow.com](#) for more information for parents, guardians and teachers..

You can report abusive websites, particularly child pornography, to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#)⁷, which also takes a handy look at various good quality content-filtering packages.

Section Resources:

- 4 <http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/advice/advice-business-ftgdsandservicessum6.cfm>
- 5 <http://www.google.com/goodtoknow/familysafety/abuse/>
- 6 <http://ceop.police.uk/>
- 7 <http://www.iwf.org.uk/>

Resource list

There's a wealth of information about the subject of online safety for kids. Here's a list of useful resources to help you learn all about keeping youngsters safe online.

- DFE [guidelines on cyber bullying](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/cyber-bullying/) (<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/resources/cyber-bullying/>)
- Symantec [Family Online Safety Guide](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/media/83401/symantecfsogukkidscape_edition.pdf) (http://www.kidscape.org.uk/media/83401/symantecfsogukkidscape_edition.pdf)
- Childnet International's [SMART rules](http://www.childnet.com/resources/the-adventures-of-kara-winston-and-the-smart-crew) (<http://www.childnet.com/resources/the-adventures-of-kara-winston-and-the-smart-crew>), delivered in cartoon form for 7-11 year olds
- [Chatdanger](#), full of advice about chat room safety
- CommonsenseMedia.org, for detailed parental advice
- From over the Atlantic, [Netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org), a great source of learning resources
- The [Family Online Safety Institute](http://www.fosi.org/resources/internet-safety-resources-for-parents.html) (<http://www.fosi.org/resources/internet-safety-resources-for-parents.html>), for more useful insight and advice
- [Microsoft Parental Controls](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows7/products/features/parental-controls) (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows7/products/features/parental-controls>) for Windows – learn how!
- [The FBI](http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide) (<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide>) on the subject – it's an international issue, but the solutions are the same wherever in the world you are
- [The National Crime Prevention Council](http://www.ncpc.org/topics/internet-safety) on internet safety (<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/internet-safety>)
- Great advice from [Google](http://www.google.co.uk/goodtoknow/) (<http://www.google.co.uk/goodtoknow/>)
- ParentsProtect.co.uk, with a focus on sexual abuse
- [Internet safety videos](http://www.netliteracy.org/safe-connects/safe-connects-psas/) (<http://www.netliteracy.org/safe-connects/safe-connects-psas/>)
- [Internet safety presentations](http://www.internetsafety.com/internet-safety-presentations.php) (<http://www.internetsafety.com/internet-safety-presentations.php>)
- And [more presentations](http://www.netsmartz.org/presentations) (<http://www.netsmartz.org/presentations>)
- [Digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org) – what it means to be a digital citizen
- [NI Direct Government services](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/click-clever-click-safe-help-your-child-enjoy-the-internet-safely) (<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/click-clever-click-safe-help-your-child-enjoy-the-internet-safely>) – information about child internet safety
- Guidance and advice from the [NSPCC.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Support for bullied people from [Turn2Me.org](http://www.turn2me.org)
- 8 skills to stop bullying from [KidPower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)
- Advice and support from [Bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- Information about dealing with bullying from the [NHS](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Bullying/Pages/Antibullyinghelp.aspx) (<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Bullying/Pages/Antibullyinghelp.aspx>)
- [StopBullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), supporting kids who are bullied
- The [National Bullying Helpline](http://nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/) (<http://nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>)
- [Childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk), advising kids in distress
- [Bully-Watch.co.uk](http://www.bully-watch.co.uk), monitoring bullying 24/7
- Information from [Mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) about self-esteem and self-confidence
- [Childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) on confidence
- The [Self Esteem Journal](http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Self-esteem-Journal-Overcoming-Problems/dp/085969898X) (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Self-esteem-Journal-Overcoming-Problems/dp/085969898X>) for kids
- [Helping Children to Build Self-Esteem](http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Self-esteem-Journal-Overcoming-Problems/dp/085969898X) (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Self-esteem-Journal-Overcoming-Problems/dp/085969898X>) by Deborah M. Plummer
- [UK certified NLP practitioners](http://www.inlpta.co.uk/practitioners.htm) (<http://www.inlpta.co.uk/practitioners.htm>), who can help with self-confidence issues
- Find your nearest [local police station](http://www.police.uk/) (<http://www.police.uk/>)
- A BBC Webwise-accredited course on [keeping safe online](http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/accredited-courses/level-one/keeping-safe-online) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/accredited-courses/level-one/keeping-safe-online>)
- [Smartphone Manuals](http://www.smartphone-manuals.com/) (<http://www.smartphone-manuals.com/>) by post, printed for you
- [Free basic online computer training](http://digitalunite.com/guides/computer-basics) (<http://digitalunite.com/guides/computer-basics>)

Children's quick reference guide

Here's a quick guide for children. We've kept it simple and fact-based for fast reference. It's also a useful resource for parents, helping you talk to your children in a structured way about the ins and outs of staying safe online. Use it for inspiration and you will be able to cover a lot of interesting ground together.

What do I do if a stranger asks for my name, address or phone number?

Never give your details to someone you don't know. If you're not 100% sure, say no.

What screen name and image should I choose?

Hide your real name. Use a sensible name, never a sexy one. Use an avatar, not a photo of yourself.

Someone is pestering me online.

Most people are genuinely nice. But if someone is getting too personal, ask them to stop. If they don't, you can block them. Tell your parents if you're worried.

How do I tell if someone is who they say they are?

If you don't recognise someone's name or picture, ignore them. If their profile looks strange in any way, ignore them. If they don't know any of your friends, ignore them.

Should I meet someone I met online in real life?

No, never. If a stranger or online friend you have never met in person wants to meet you, tell your parents so they can report it to the right people.

Someone is making me feel uncomfortable online.

Ignore them and talk to people you trust about it. If they think there's something to worry about, you can sort it out together.

Someone has passed me a cyberbullying message. Should I share it?

No. It's mean. Think how you would feel if you were being bullied.

Can I tell my friends to stop cyberbullying?

Yes. Most people do it to fit in. But if you stand up for other people, you're a hero.

Should I block cyberbullies?

Yes. It shuts them up.

Should I report cyberbullying to an adult?

Yes, because they will know how to stop it. It isn't illegal, but you can get still into big trouble with the police for cyberbullying, even if it wasn't you who started it. It's best not to join in... ever!

I'm feeling really angry with someone online.

Keep calm. Leave your computer or phone alone for a bit until you feel better. Don't reply if you think you will react badly. And remember, if you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.

My friend has shared my personal information with other people on Facebook.

Get them to delete it or take it down straight away. Then change your password. Your friend would be safer if they knew how to behave properly online, so maybe you can talk to them about it.

Who should see my profile?

Only the people you know, or who you know for sure you can trust.

My friend is being bullied. Can I help?

Yes, you can stick together and beat the bullies. Get as many of your friends as you can to block the bullies and ignore them until they get bored. If it's school people who are doing the bullying, tell your teacher. They will be able to help.

I'm worried about getting in trouble.

If you think you might be going to do something silly, count to twenty first. If your heart is telling you it's the wrong thing to do, don't do it!

I don't want to be a tell-tale.

If you make your feelings clear, your parents or teachers will be able to stop the bullying without your friends knowing about it.

I just did something mean online. It feels bad.

The best thing to do is say sorry straight away. You will feel much better.

I just saw something awful online.

Don't worry. Talk to your parents about it and they will be able to explain things and reassure you.

My friend has gone to meet a stranger she met online.

Call the police on 999.

My friend told me not to say anything.

If you know it's wrong, tell your parents and help keep your friend safe.

Someone I don't know just phoned me on my mobile.

Block their number and tell your parents.

I got into an argument online.

Go and do something else while you calm down. Leave it until tomorrow then see how you feel. Then you can apologise to each other.

Someone has just said something mean to me online.

It's best to ignore it. If you join in, the bully will think they have hurt you. If you stay quiet, they will get bored. You can block them if they keep doing it.

Can my parents tell if I've been looking at sites I'm not allowed to see?

Yes, they know how to check where you have been online.

I was being teased a bit but now it is turning into bullying.

It is best to stop bullying quickly, before it gets any worse. Your parents will be able to help you, so talk to them about it.



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