

Keep things fun, safe and respectful when you're online.



The internet is an amazing place to be creative, chat with friends and find interesting fun stuff. You may spend a lot of time online during the lockdown restrictions especially with home school learning, so it's important to make the most of it and enjoy it whilst also being safe, sensible and respectful to others too. Here's our guide to being smart about what you do online.

Online friendships

Try to think of your online world as an extension of your offline friendships. Include friends in your activities, it can feel just as hurtful to be left out of online games or chat as offline ones. Be careful how you word things too, sometimes the written word can be misinterpreted. So whether it's emails, texts or posts, be considerate to how they may come across. Save your important conversations, like resolving conflicts, for face to face meetings.

Be respectful

Be respectful of your friends on social media. Don't share information about your friends online. Try to be mindful of how your messages will make people feel before you send them. You'll care about what other people send about you - so be courteous to others too.

Be aware of your digital footprint

Every time you go online you leave what's called a digital footprint which shows others where you are and what you have been doing. So while sending messages or pictures and videos is great for sharing with friends and being creative, always remember that once an image or file is online it's likely to stay there forever.

Think before you post

Always remember that when you respond to something someone's said, there's a person at the other end who has feelings, just like you do.

Know who you're dealing with

Socialising online can be fun, it's a great way to keep in touch with friends and family. Lots of people only play or chat with people they know in person, and that's a sensible approach. But if you do meet people you don't know, use the same caution that you would offline. Always remember people may not be who they say they are, so be mindful about what you say about yourself. Keep chat general and if you are concerned that someone's asking for personal details, then stop contact and tell a trusted adult. Never arrange to meet someone you only know online.

Protect your identity

When using the internet never give out personal information, such as your number, where you live or what school you go to. If you are using social media check the age restrictions and make

sure you are old enough to be on them. If you are old enough, ensure your privacy is private and only friends can see your posts.

Keep a healthy balance

The internet is a fantastic resource for research and schoolwork, but make sure you take regular breaks away from the screen.

Other resources to support staying safe and smart online;

- Child Net has created a short movie to illustrate how to stay Smart online.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/the-adventures-of-kara-winston-and-the-smart-crew/watch-full-movie>

- What does your identity look like online and do you feel free to be yourself? Take this quiz designed for 7-13 year olds, but can be played by anyone!

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2020/safer-internet-day-2020-quiz>

