ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

TOP TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS TECH GIFTS

With phones, tablets, consoles or technology wearables continuing to top the Christmas wish lists of many children and young people, it is likely that many of our students will be lucky enough to receive one as a gift this year. Here are some top tips for parents and carers to consider before those devices, whether new or 'new to you', are unwrapped on December 25th.

1. SET UP AND PLAY WITH THE DEVICE BEFORE WRAPPING

Test the safety settings, reporting tools and other features on the device before gifting.
This will give you peace of mind that your child is receiving a fully functioning, charged device that you are able to help with.

If you are not planning to open the gift before Christmas ensure that filtering is applied to your home Wi-Fi and that you still set up the device before your child uses it after they have opened it. Further advice can be found at: advice for parents and carers.

It's important to remember that no filter is ever 100% effective on its own and talking to your child about what to do if they see something that worries or upsets them is key.

2. DISCUSS YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Creating a family agreement is a brilliant way to think about how your family uses the internet and to understand why it is important to stay safe and be responsible online. It allows you to set out your expectations regarding technology use in the home and for your children to let you know their feelings too. Involving your children can give them a sense of ownership

and responsibility for the agreement that is made.

Points could include daily screen time allowances, where the device is kept at night, approving friend requests, and permission to download or purchase apps. The family agreement template may help.

3. GIVE PRACTICAL SAFETY TIPS

One of the most important things you can do before giving technology to your child is to talk to them about it. Having a conversation demonstrates that you are engaged and interested in their online lives and that you are always available to help them.

Whilst we recommend that parental controls are activated they are never one hundred percent guaranteed. Your child might also find themselves in a location with unfiltered Wi-Fi so knowledge is the best tool they can have.

Giving practical tips for dealing with unwanted content or contact is helpful and can be done as soon as your children start using technology. At the most basic level this could be; "turn the screen off," or, "turn the device over," and, "come and get an

adult." If your child is more independent online it could be a case of showing how to take a screenshot or ensuring they know where to find the blocking and reporting options on each service they are using.

Reassuring your child that they can always come to you or another trusted adult - to ask for help – in any situation and without judgement is essential. Whatever it is that your child needs help with try to remain calm. The way you respond will have an impact on your child's experience and may influence how they feel about asking for help in the future.

4. KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS GOING!

Finding natural, regular opportunities to start conversations around life online will show you are engaged and interested in your child's activities and will help your child feel confident that you can help them.

Conversation starters to facilitate these discussions could include:

- What do you like best about this app or game?
- Can you teach me how to play this game?
- What tips can you give me about spending time online?
- What is okay or not okay to share online?
- How would you help a friend if they were worried about something online?

This article was originally posted on childnet.com
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RESOURCES TO HELP YOU:

Childnet Key Topics for Parents
Online Issues and social media guides on UKSIC
Keeping Under-Fives Safe Online
Common Sense Media
Ask About Games

Social media and mental health
How we experience social media can affect our mood. Young Minds together with O2 have gathered tips and advice on how to enjoy a more positive time online.
Here are tips for talking to your child about their use of social media and the internet including:

- Have conversations from a young age
- Lead by example
- Talk about personal information
- Act on warning signs

Details can be found at: Young Minds | Parents Guide To Support - Social Media and the Internet.

Parent Zone
Offers advice and support to parents and carers to help children be safer online, develop resilience to cope with online challenges and help educate them for their digital futures. Tips and information from experts are available about parenting in the digital world.
The top articles include:
• The six apps and services that every parent should know about. A guide for parents to some of the most popular apps children use online. • Screen time: everything you need to know
• Low mood - or something else
There is also a comprehensive parental guide section which gives information and safety advice on many popular games and apps including; Fortnite, Disney+, Clash of Clans and Roblox.
Parent Zone | Parent Guides