



Technology is hugely valuable for education, as we have seen over the past two years, as well as being a great way to keep in touch with family and friends.

However, it is also important to consider the dangers for young people spending time online.

Online grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship or connection with a child so that they can exploit, manipulate or abuse them. Online grooming can take place on social media sites, in messaging apps and through forums or chat functions in online games.

Online grooming crimes recorded by police jumped by around 70% in the last three years reaching an all-time high in 2021. (NSPCC, 2021)

Online gaming

Online games are social activities, and most have features that allow young people to chat with others whilst they play.

For information about the positives of gaming, the risks of 'in-game chat' and measures you can take to help protect your child, watch this short video from CEOP:

[In-game chat: a guide for parents and carers.](#)

Sharing images

Young people often share images or 'selfies' and there is potential for some of those to be nude or nearly nude images. Young people share 'nudes' for a number of different reasons, and some situations are more risky than others.

For information about the contexts in which images are shared and how best to respond, take a look at [nude selfies: a parents guide.](#)



Top tips

With Christmas approaching, it is likely that many children will receive new devices. See the tips below to help you to encourage your child to use their smart phone responsibly.



Limit screen time – set screen time limits via the settings on the phone.



Set up parental controls to restrict purchases and content on new devices.



Regularly check internet history and new apps downloaded.



Don't allow phones in bedrooms at night time.



Check the minimum age for the apps and games your child is using e.g. TikTok minimum age is 13.



Have frequent, open discussions about the dangers of using the internet and how they can minimise these risks.

Useful links

<https://saint-michaels.thesharpsystem.com/>

<https://www.saint-michaels.com/wellbeing/online-safety>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<http://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/>

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>