



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



## Online Safety for Children & Young People

As per Public Health Guidelines which have introduced the Stay at Home Policy and Social Distancing measures due to Covid 19, it places greater challenges than ever for parents to ensure that children are safe in their homes in terms of their online activities.

Now, more than ever it is important that parents know how to talk with and keep their children safe online.

### Recent research has shown that:

- 1 in 3 internet users are children
- 1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site.

### The key to helping your child be safe online is:

- Talk with your children and help them understand that they should only be friends with and share information with people that they know online.
- Children should be taught to only post comments/ photos or videos of content that they would know that their parents would be happy to read or see.
- Ensure information shared is positive, real and healthy.
- Parents to ensure that children use social networking apps that are secure/have parental controls which are set suitable to their child's age and ability.
- Teach children to keep their personal data private. Parents to ensure that "Restriction Settings" are used re: content availability and location settings.
- Parents to tell children that they are going to place boundaries on:
  - Time limited access online
  - Where in the home children can use social media,
  - Parents to monitor their child's use of technology and have access at all times to passwords and to do this in an open way.
  - Keep these conversations open transparent and clear; this will remind children for the need to be safe online, it is not about catching them doing something worrying, rather it is about teaching them to be sensible and safe online.



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- Children to hand up their devices at night, this will help improve sleep hygiene, it is safer and is a good habit forming behaviour for life.
- Parents to reassure their child if someone tries to make contact with them that makes them feel uncomfortable, that they can tell their parents and are not in trouble for doing so.
- If anything suspicious is sent to your children possibly illegal or abusive, remove the device from your child, do not delete it and contact An Garda Síochána.

#### **Parents to be vigilant for:**

- Online Bullying: Bullying can take place on any online forum and social media sites. It can also take place on mobile phones and because technology is everywhere, it is more invasive as it continues outside school.
- Sexting: children sharing intimate images on line which are then used as bullying or
- Exploitation: adults contacting children on line.

#### **Additional online resources to help parents include:**

- <https://cybersafeireland.org>
- <https://www.webwise.ie/>
- <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/advice-top-10-tips-for-parents/>
- <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/covid19-online-safety-advice-for-parents/>
- [https://www.cypsc.ie/fileupload/Documents/Resources/Wicklow/Parents%20Safety%20Handbook\\_emailing%20purposes.pdf](https://www.cypsc.ie/fileupload/Documents/Resources/Wicklow/Parents%20Safety%20Handbook_emailing%20purposes.pdf) A Parents guide to Device safety developed by Wicklow CYPSC.