KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

A guide for parents and carers of primary-age children (5–11)

Children are going online more than ever — to learn, play and connect. Most online experiences are positive, but there are some **key risks and trends** it's important for families and schools to understand and talk about together.
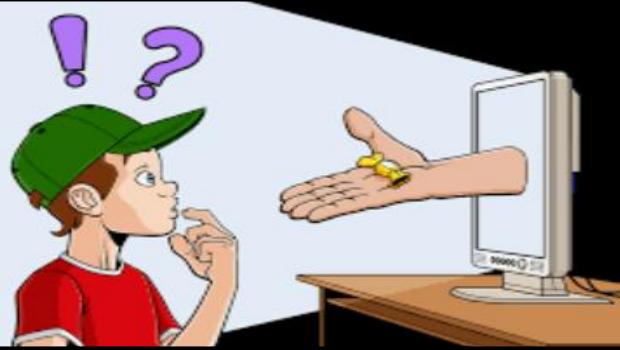
🔲 Age-Inappropriate Content

Children can come across videos, images or language that isn't suitable for their age, even by accident — especially on video platforms, apps and games.

What you can do:

- use child-friendly apps and profiles
- turn on parental controls and safe searching
- encourage children to talk to you if something upsets or confuses them

💬 Social Apps and Messaging

Many primary-age children use messaging apps or social platforms before the recommended age, often through group chats or games.

Risks include:

- pressure to join group chats
- arguments or misunderstandings
- seeing or hearing things meant for older users

Talk to your child about:

- why apps have age limits
- being kind and respectful online
- not replying to messages that make them uncomfortable

🎮 Online Gaming and Chat Features

Popular games may allow children to talk to people they don't know.

Key messages for children:

- only play and chat with people they know in real life
- never share personal information in games
- tell a trusted adult if something feels wrong
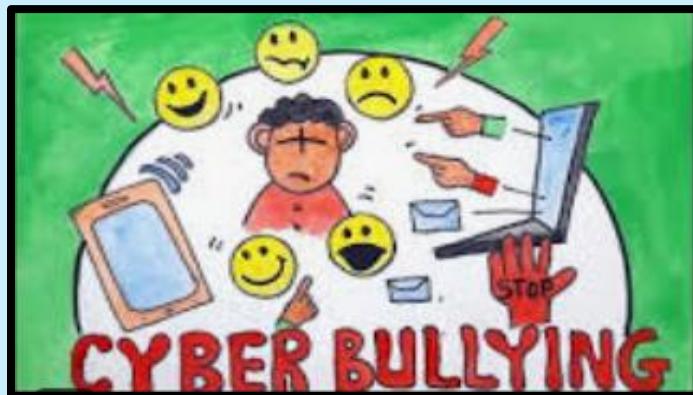
🚫 Online Bullying and Unkind Behaviour

Unkind messages, name-calling or exclusion can happen online, just like offline.

Reassure your child that:

- bullying is never their fault
- they should save evidence and tell an adult
- blocking and reporting are okay

🔒 Privacy and Personal Information

Children don't always know what should stay private. Try to help your child understand that they should:

- never share passwords, addresses, school names or phone numbers
- think before posting photos or videos
- remember that once something is online, it can be hard to remove

🎁 Scams and "Too Good to Be True" Offers

Children may see pop-ups, links or messages offering free games, prizes or currency.

Teach children to:

- ask an adult before clicking links or downloading anything
- be cautious of messages that rush or pressure them
- understand that free offers are often not real

⏰ Screen Time and Well-Being

Too much screen time can affect sleep, mood and concentration.

Helpful tips:

- set clear routines and boundaries
- keep devices out of bedrooms at night
- balance screen time with offline play and family time

It's Good to Talk

🗣️ The Most Important Thing: Keep Talking

Children are more likely to stay safe online when they know they can talk to trusted adults without fear of getting into trouble.

Let them know:

- you won't be angry
- you're glad they told you
- you'll help them sort it out

🤖 New Technology and AI

Children may see content chosen by algorithms or interact with AI features in apps and games.

As parents you don't need to be experts — you just need to be curious.
Ask:

- "What do you like watching or playing online?"
- "How did that video or game find you?"

✅ Simple Safety Steps for Home

✓ use parental controls on devices and Wi-Fi
✓ check privacy settings regularly
✓ agree family rules for going online
✓ model positive online behaviour

Working together, schools and families can help children enjoy the online world safely and confidently.