

Inappropriate Content Online Advice for Parents

We have seen an increase in the number of schools reporting that students, while at home, have accessed content which is not always appropriate, some of which has been quite scary or upsetting. We have also had a report of worrying trends on TikTok encouraging nudity from its users. This can have legal implications for our children and young people that they often aren't aware of.

While there is no perfect way to eliminate this risk, we feel that there are things parents and carers can do to support their children online, reduce the risk or manage it after the fact. Remember to keep lines of Communication open with your children and young people. Just like we ask them how their day was at school and what they got up to it is equally important to have this conversation about their Online lives. If you can keep technology out of the bedrooms and private spaces this is also an effective tool in safeguarding our children.

Here are some more practical steps parents and carers can follow:

- Contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP): Companies that provide broadband such as BT, Sky and Virgin, offer free protection for parents and carers. They can filter your internet connection directly, without having to install anything. Guide on how to use this can be found here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/broadband-mobile/>
- YouTube is a fantastic resource, but not all the content is appropriate for children and not all YouTube channels are made for young audiences. YouTube has an app just for children – YouTube Kids – but many people don't realise that the main YouTube app has a restricted mode. Check out more about how it works here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/youtube-app/>
- Parental Controls for Devices - <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/smartphones-and-other-devices/>
- Games consoles have features that can limit what games they can play based on the age ratings and can even turn off certain features to allow gaming to be a little safer. To learn more about these features visit <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/>
- Games are also rated based on the content; not how difficult they are. 18 rated games can have very graphic violence, adult language and themes, sexual content, and horror elements. Learn a bit more about appropriate games by visiting <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming-whats-appropriate-for-your-child/> or visit this site for more about game ratings <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/pegi-games-ratings-explained>
- Social Media privacy guide - <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/social-media/>

Have you heard about Tik Tok Family Pairing <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktok-introduces-family-pairing> Family pairing allows adults to link their accounts to their teenagers account so you can customise their safety settings such as content, privacy and well being settings.

It's important to remember that no filters or controls are 100% effective so make sure your child knows that they can, and should, talk to someone if they see or hear anything upsetting online so we can offer them some reassurance. This information from Thinkuknow might be useful <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Im-worried-my-primary-aged-child-might-see-something-inappropriate-online/>

Kathryn Smith
Community Safety Strategy Coordinator lead for Preventative Education