

# Internet Safety Top Tips for Parents

Check out our top internet safety advice to make sure going online is a positive experience for you and your child:

- **Discover the internet together**

Be the one to introduce your child to the internet. For both parent and child it is an advantage to discover the internet together. Try to find websites that are exciting and fun so that together you achieve a positive attitude to internet exploration. This could make it easier to share both positive and negative experiences in the future.

- **Agree with your child rules for internet use in your home**

Try to reach an agreement with your child on the guidelines which apply to internet use in your home. Here are some tips to get started:

- Discuss when and for how long it is acceptable for your child to use the internet
- Agree how to treat personal information (name, address, telephone, email)
- Discuss how to behave towards others
- Agree what type of sites and activities are OK or not OK
- Follow the rules yourself! Or at least explain why the rules are different for adults.

- **Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information**

A simple rule for younger children should be that the child should not give out their name, phone number or photo without your approval. Older children using social networking sites like Facebook should be encouraged to be selective about what personal information and photos they post to online spaces. Regardless of privacy settings, once material is online you can no longer control who sees it or how it is used.

- **Talk about the risks associated with meeting online 'friends' in person**

Adults should understand that the internet can be a positive meeting place for children, where they can get to know other young people and make new friends. However, for safety and to avoid unpleasant experiences, it is important that children do not meet strangers they have met online without being accompanied by an adult you trust. In any case, the child should always have their parents' approval first. In addition, it is also a good idea to have a fail-safe plan in place such as calling them shortly after the meeting begins so that they can bail out if they feel uncomfortable.

- **Teach your child about evaluating information and being critically aware of information they find online.**

Most children use the internet to improve and develop their knowledge in relation to schoolwork and personal interests. Children should be aware that not all information found online is correct, accurate or relevant. Show your child how to check information they find by comparing it to alternative sources on the same topic. Show them trusted sites they can use to compare information.

- **Don't be too critical towards your child's exploration of the internet**

Children may come across adult material by accident on the web. Also, a child may intentionally search for such websites; remember that it is natural for children to be curious about off limits material. Try to use this as an opening to discuss the content with them, and perhaps make rules for this kind of activity. Be realistic in your assessment of how your child uses the internet.

- **Let your children show you what they like to do online**

To be able to guide your child it is important to understand how children use the internet and know what they like to do online. Let your child show you which websites they like visiting and what they do there.

- **Remember that the positive aspects of the internet outweigh the negatives.**

The internet is an excellent educational and recreational resource for children. Encourage your child to make the most of it and explore the internet to its full potential.



# Internet Safety Advice for Parents of Young Children

## Internet Safety

### Talk about internet Safety with your Child

Have a conversation with your child on some of the important things to watch out for when going online for the first time. Young children will not be aware of the dangers, so it is very important to talk with them about who they talk to and about sharing personal information online

### Use Parental Controls

Most internet technologies have built-in controls that allow you to limit the amount of time your child can spend online, restrict their access to adult content, and switch off functions like shopping and chatting. Filtering controls are particularly useful at preventing young children from accidentally encountering content that might bother them.

### Disable In-App Purchases

Many apps and games give their users the option of buying additional game functionality, additional points/bonuses, and a host of other extras. Children can easily make purchases without even realising. You can disable in-app purchases using your phone or device settings.

### Activate Safe Search

Help minimise the risk of your child coming across inappropriate content in response to search queries by activating 'safe search' in your search engine.

### Agree on what to do when things go wrong

We recommend that you speak to your child about what to do if they come across something on the internet that bothers them. This could be closing the laptop lid or turning off the screen and coming to get you.

### Set Up a Family Email

Set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online.

### Play it Safe

For young children we recommend that parents choose safe and appropriate games for their child to play online. Most games have a rating you can check to see if they are age appropriate. You should also check if a game allows for player interaction and if there is a safe chat mode.

## At Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh

### Internet Safety at CSN

Internet Safety at CSN focuses on students developing a set of skills, knowledge and values that allows them to make informed decisions to effectively and responsibly manage their digital life. As part of our computer curriculum students learn about managing their online presence, responsible online behaviour and the value of using digital media ethically and efficiently for the benefit of individuals and society. This strand of our curriculum promotes a smooth transition into secondary school life, and develops personal responsibility in areas of physical and mental well-being. Older students develop their leadership skills as they organise events such as Internet Safety Week, Parents' evenings, and the Trend Micro Internet Safety Programme.

# Managing Technology Use at Home

Are you concerned about how much time your child spends on their phone, tablet, or computer? Here are some pointers to help you deal with this tricky issue that is causing conflict in our homes. It is important to remember that children often welcome time-off from social media and games and can welcome clear guidelines and boundaries in this area.

## How much is too much?

Unfortunately, there is no magic number. Children use their devices and computers for lots of different reasons - to learn, to play, and to socialise. The most important thing is to agree clear rules on technology use and set a good example.

## Helpful Pointers:

- **No.1** Agree a clear set of rules with your child on technology use in the home. Talk to your child on when and where you think it is appropriate to use screens. Agree times when technology is allowed and when they are not allowed in the home. We suggest dinner time, homework time (unless you are using it to help with your homework) and bedtime is a good start to the not allowed list.
- **No.2** Do as you say. Modelling behaviour is the most powerful way you can influence your child's behaviour.
- **No.3** Restrict the use of computers and devices in the bedroom. Depending on the age of your child you may want to set a curfew or ban devices from the bedroom completely.
- **No.4** Buy an alarm clock for your child's bedroom and charge their phones and devices in your room or downstairs at night time. This can be a helpful way of giving them a break from the internet
- **No.5** Try not to rely on technology too much to keep the kids amused. It can be easy to encourage them to pick up the tablet or play a game on the computer to keep them occupied. This only confuses rules on technology use, try and stick to the agreed rules with your child and remember to set a good example.
- **No.6** Chat to your child about what they do online and encourage them to use their time online for learning, creativity and education.
- **No.7** Encourage your child to have a healthy balance. Experts say time spent online should not affect sleep, exercise or time with family. Doing activities together as a family will help implement guidelines around technology use and offer fun alternatives.
- **No.8** Don't have screens always on in the background. Turn off TVs and computers when not in use, these can be distracting for kids if they are trying to participate in another activity.
- **No.9** Finally, join in! Why not set some time aside to play your child's favourite computer game and discover the online world together.



# Children & Social Media

## What is the Right Age to Start?

Deciding at what age to allow your child to start using social media is a common dilemma for parents. Age restrictions vary across social media platforms; in Ireland the Digital Age of Consent is now set at 16 years old. With almost all services it is very easy to sign-up with a false date of birth. That said, the companies are pretty quick to delete the accounts of users when they discover they are underage.

## What is the Digital Age of Consent?

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media and internet companies can collect, process and store their data. In May 2018, the EU adopted a new set of Data Protection Regulations. The GDPR introduces substantial changes to European data protection law. The new regulations require member states to set a digital age of consent. **Ireland has adopted 16 as the digital age of consent.** The requirements of the GDPR also state that the processing of data of children under the age of 16, in respect of online services, shall not be lawful without parental consent.

## What are the Key Things to Think About?

We know that some parents give permission to their underage-children to set up accounts on social networking services and it's easy to get past their age checks. Ultimately, you need to decide if your child is equipped to deal with the social pressures that arise from social networking. The pressure to 'fit in' and/or to 'be popular' can be intense. Romance, group dynamics, and bullying can contribute to creating choppy waters that even adults find difficult to navigate.

## Find Out More

Find out more at:

[csncork.ie/digitallearning](http://csncork.ie/digitallearning)

[webwise.ie/parents](http://webwise.ie/parents)