

## Tips and advice on keeping your child safe online



(information from <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/Parents/InternetSafety/>)

- Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends they do not know offline.
- Explain to your children what information about them is personal: i.e. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club, arrangements for meeting up with friends and any pictures or videos of themselves, their family or friends. Small pieces of information can easily be pieced together to form a comprehensive insight in to their lives and daily activities.
- Make your children aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles. Inform them that once published online, anyone can change or share these images of them.
- It can be easy to forget that the internet is not a private space, and as result sometimes young people engage in risky behaviour online. Advise your children not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see.
- If your child receives spam or junk email and texts, remind them never to believe their contents, reply to them or use them.
- It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain—it could be a virus, or worse - an inappropriate image or film.
- Help your child to understand that some people lie online and that therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust.
- Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

## Child friendly search engines

(information from <http://www.safekids.co.uk/ChildFriendlySearchEngines.html>)



## **Child-Friendly Search Engines**

Below is a summary of some of the most popular child friendly search engines:

### **Ask Jeeves For Kids**

[www.askkids.com](http://www.askkids.com) - combines human editorial judgment, age-appropriate feature content and filtering technology to enable kids to find both relevant and befitting information on the web.

It is designed to be a kid-friendly way for children to search online with a focus on learning and educational entertainment. Ask for Kids uses natural-language technology that allows kids to ask

questions and perform web searches, such as "When did Hawaii become a state?" or "What's it like to live in space?" or even "Convert 122 inches into feet" in the same way they would ask a parent, friend or teacher.

### Yahoo Kids!

[www.kids.yahoo.com](http://www.kids.yahoo.com) – the Yahoo for kids is designed for ages 7 to 12. All of the sites are hand-picked to be appropriate for children. Also, unlike normal Yahoo, searches will not bring back matches found by crawling the web, if there is no match from within the Yahoo! listings. This prevents possibly objectionable sites from slipping onto the screen.

Additionally, adult-oriented banner advertising will not appear within the service. Yahoo! is the oldest major directory for children, launched in March 1996.

### Looksmart Kids Directory

[netnanny.com](http://netnanny.com) - the Kids directory is a list of over 22,000 child-friendly websites that were hand-picked by people at Netnanny and vetted for both quality and offensive content.

### Filtering Options

Most major search engines including Google, Yahoo (in the main) and MSN obtain their listings by crawling the web and then using advanced techniques to determine search results. The fact there is no human review and categorisation, as with the child-friendly sites listed above, means it's easy for undesirable material to appear in search results.

As a solution, most major search engines offer the ability to filter the results to keep out pornography and other material that you would not want your children to encounter. Below are some tips on enabling child safe filtering in major search engines:

- **Google:** Go to the Google Home Page, select Preferences (on the right of the search box) and in the SafeSearch Filtering section select the option for 'Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images)'.
- **MSN Search:** Use the Safe Search Filter on the Settings page.
- **Yahoo:** Set the SafeSearch Filter option via the Search Preferences page.
- **AltaVista:** Use the Family Filter Setup page.
- **AOL Search:** Doesn't appear to offer a filter, but enabling Parental Controls might have an impact on web search matches.
- **Ask Jeeves:** Use options for Content Filtering on the Your Settings page or try Ask For Kids.
- **Lycos:** Use the Adult Filter section of the Advanced Search Filters page.

### Filtering and Blocking Software

One alternative option is filtering software which works across the entire web, not just for search results. Most filtering software provides a decent level of control for parents to determine what is and is not allowed for the kids to see. CyberPatrol and NetNanny are two of the most widely used programs for this type of control.

### KidsClick!

[www.kidsclick.org](http://www.kidsclick.org) - this site has been set up by librarians and lists, in child friendly categories, around 5,000 web sites.

## Increase the filtering in Google-

- Google: Go to the Google Home Page select 'Search Settings' (on the top right of the screen) and in the SafeSearch Filtering section select the option for 'Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images)'

## Parental controls

- These can be accessed through your internet security package (Norton, McAfee or such like) or purchased as filtering software (examples are Cyber Patrol and Net Nanny)

## Helpful websites:

- DirectGov website

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121015000000/www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Internetsafety/DG\\_071138CEOP\\_website](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121015000000/www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Internetsafety/DG_071138CEOP_website)

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

## Safety Features of Mobile Phones

[http://www.internetdangers.com/safety\\_features\\_mobile\\_phones.htm](http://www.internetdangers.com/safety_features_mobile_phones.htm)

Mobile phones are a great way for parents to stay in touch with their kids wherever they are, and there are huge numbers of kids who have mobile phones for this very purpose. Mobile phone technology has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years with internet access, instant messaging and multimedia texting all available to a young audience. These developments have also come with their criticism as some worry that children will have access to inappropriate content and be at risk of being contacted by inappropriate parties. For worried parents there is some encouraging news as both mobile phone manufacturers and networks have taken these problems into account, resulting in many mobile phones and mobile services coming with built in safety features. Let`s look at some of the features available and ways to improve the safety of mobile use for your children.



## **Content Control**

With 3G and Wi-Fi on some handsets allowing kids to access the internet on the go there`s the chance that they can view inappropriate content on their handsets without your knowledge. In order to prevent this many of the big networks like T-Mobile have been working in partnership with the NSPCC to lock off inappropriate content from younger mobile users. This means that content available from the network which is rated unsuitable for younger audiences will not be available to them, and though this is a completely free service you`ll need to set up the content lock yourself before you give the phone to your child. This is particularly important to remember if you`re giving them an old phone you owned that had no restrictions on it.

It`s also important to remember that children will still be able to access inappropriate content if it`s sent to them by a friend or other mobile users and the network will be unable to filter it. Like

most situations the best solution is dialogue, and having a conversation with your child about what is inappropriate content to have and view on their phone will avert any conflicts later.

### **Mobile Locators**

Some networks offer location services which passively monitor a child's whereabouts based on their mobile phone signals. These services need the consent of both parties and can be stopped at any time should the child wish it, but it is an option for parents with more vulnerable children. Bear in mind that mobile phones get left unattended.

### **Avoiding Theft**

Mobile phones are hugely popular amongst young people and an equally popular target for thieves. Talk to your child, let them know the risks about using a phone or leaving it in an unsecured location and explain that using a phone whilst alone on the street will leave them extremely vulnerable to criminal activity. Making your child aware of the risks is the best way to prevent crime, but you can also register your child's phone with the police so that in the event of a theft it can be identified and recovered where possible.

### Social Network Sites – Facebook, Beebo etc

Social Network sites have an age restriction for a reason. The content on them is only suitable for young adults above the age that is specified - in the case of Facebook, people over the age of 13.

Children under the age of 13 do not have the maturity to make decisions about what should and shouldn't be uploaded to the site and which information is and isn't ok to display to others. Although Facebook has people dedicated to removing harmful or offensive material it is only done when it is reported ie: after it is viewed by someone and then reported to the company.

Online it is impossible to say for sure who you are communicating with. Children will assume that the people who they communicate with or who communicate with them are the genuine article. The grooming of children via social networking sites is a very real danger if your child is allowed unrestricted or unsupervised access to a teenage or adult resource.