

SAFE SEARCHING

When should my kids start using technology?

Finding information online sees us use search engines as part of modern living and learning. Our children especially use the numerous search engines for researching school assignments or being entertained.

Open access can result in the risk of seeing inappropriate content and material, here's some things to keep in mind:

- Using child-friendly search engines : Google Safe Search for Kids, GoGooligans, KidzSearch, KidsClick, KidRex and Swiggle.
- Safe search settings : UK Safer Internet Centre provides useful information about the safety features offered by Apple, Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox.
- Install security software and ensure it is regularly updated.
- Bookmark the kids favourite sites so they can easily go to them instead of browsing more generally
- Check a website's safety rating before visiting it by using online search tools that help identify malicious websites.
- Regular chats with your children are the best way to improve their knowledge and understanding.



Finding time also when things go wrong, talking openly about what and how it has happened and what could be done for next time means as a family you are growing your digital understanding together.

Useful conversations to have with children:

- Discussing safe searching topics above
- Teaching how to bookmark their favourite sites and then access on home computers, laptops and home networks
- Family rules around internet use and setting expectations on what is acceptable and what is not.
- De-briefing if inappropriate content or materials have been seen

It is impossible to lock down or supervise internet use, the key will be building your child's skills, capability and trust. Explain the family rules and be open to their suggestions about usage.

[Some great information from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, click here](#)

We suggest you check this out:

