

Internet Safety and Responsible Use

What do we do at school?
To encourage safety and
responsibility?

Because of London Grid for Learning filter/blocker we have at school, it would be very hard for any of the children to read or see anything not age appropriate.

Also, the children are rarely on the internet, and never unsupervised.

However, we give the children a talk about what to do if they see or read anything upsetting before any lesson where we use the internet, even if it's a brief image search as part of a different sort of lesson.

What we ask the children to do, is to put down the tablet or turn off the monitor.

That way we can investigate what has happened and potentially use London Grid for Learning to block that site, which would also flag that site to other schools.

So, that's school, but what about home?

In the same way we teach about road safety in school, even though we don't have any roads in the school, we teach about safety outside the school.

We talk to the children about the internet being full of wonderful things, but that it can also be scary and dangerous.

We talk about the danger of seeing something scary or upsetting.

We talk about the danger of accidentally downloading something that could break your device or steal your parents' money.

We talk about the dangers of unkind people upsetting them with name calling; we don't use the term cyberbullying but that how we start to address it.

We talk about people pretending to be people they're not to trick you into sharing information about themselves, we don't use the term grooming, but that's how we start to address it.

The earliest message we give in Nursery and Reception is don't click on apps or links on your parents phone or tablet when they're not there.

This is framed under the 'you might see something that might upset you' message and as they progress through the school we'll mention that by clicking on links without a parent, you might also download malicious software.

The biggest danger at this stage for most children is the 'up next' algorithm on YouTube or other similar automatic play features of TikTok and the like. So we try to get the message across that content should be watched with a grown-up or at least a grown-up nearby, so they can be warned when something new is coming on.

The next area we touch on, mostly so it can be revisited when they're older is the beginnings of interacting with other people on-line.

For most children this will probably be through gaming or a gaming platform.

Because we know that most children don't game on-line at the moment, we don't go into specifics about particular games or platforms, because by the time they do, it'll probably be something new anyway.

What we do do is to stress that they should never share information or pictures, because you don't know what other people might do with it and to always be kind.

The analogy we use is; 'Would you do it in a playground?'

Would you meet someone for the first time in a playground and call them horrible names? Would you try to make them feel sad for something they're not good at? Would you give them the keys to your house?

Well, in that case, don't do it on the internet.

Also if someone was mean to you in a playground, what would you do?

Would you keep talking to them? Insult them back?

Or would you go and find an adult and ask them for help?

That's what we recommend the children to do.

Like a lot of what we do, we're early introducers.

A lot of this isn't going to be clearly remembered, especially about how to treat others on-line, as they're not interacting with others on-line yet.

But, we feel we're laying the foundations that can be built upon later.

So, what can you do at home?

You may not need to yet, but it's worth looking at parental locks on anything that can be used to access the internet and on streaming services:

internetmatters.org/controls

But the most important thing you can do to keep your child safe on the internet and help them to be a responsible user is to talk to them.

What you talk about and when is going to be down to you, but it's always best to have these conversations before your children see something they shouldn't, are cyberbullied or contacted by someone trying to groom them.

What might they *see*?

<https://www.bbfc.co.uk/about-us/news/children-see-pornography-as-young-as-seven-new-report-finds>

A survey by the BBFC from 2019 found that a lot of children's first time seeing pornography on-line was accidental.

This is from that survey –

The majority of young people's first time watching pornography was accidental, with 62% of 11-13 year olds who had seen pornography reporting that they stumbled across it unintentionally. Children described feeling “grossed out” and “confused”, particularly those who had seen pornography when they were under the age of 10.

Now if you've already had a talk with your children about this before they see it, that's going to make it a lot easier to put what they've seen into context and also, hopefully, talk to you about it.

Also from the survey –

David Austin, Chief Executive of the BBFC, said: “Pornography is currently one click away for children of all ages in the UK, and this research supports the growing body of evidence that it is affecting the way young people understand healthy relationships, sex, body image and consent. The research also shows that when young children — in some cases as young as seven or eight years old — first see pornography online, it is most commonly not on purpose.”

There was another survey where the majority of teens asked, said they would have much rather had a conversation with their parents before they saw pornography.

So, in a lot of ways it's about information, what information are they getting and from where?

If they're not getting it from you, where are they getting it from?

School provides some, but it's relatively limited and will often come too late.

One quote that I think sums it up nicely is ‘Learning about sex from pornography, it’s like learning to drive from monster truck rallies.’

So, yes, talk to your children. There’s a lot of on-line support of how you can have these conversations and the younger you start, the less embarrassment there is.

This NSPCC one is pretty simple and straightforward:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/advice-and-info/online-pornography-keep-child-safe.pdf>

Cyberbullying

We don't specifically talk about cyberbullying, preferring to go with a 'try to be kind, if others aren't talk to an adult' type of message, but it's certainly worth considering about when you might want to talk about it.

If your child starts any kind of on-line activity where they have a regular profile that can be messaged, either by text or voice chat, it's probably worth doing.

Grooming

When to talk about grooming is a hard one to pin down. Like cyberbullying, until your child is more active on-line, there isn't as much of a need, but it's certainly worth thinking about.

There's this useful document:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/dc74b99f-3906-49a0-bb5a-a08e8d63fc72/a-family-guide-to-talking-about-grooming.pdf>

The links from the Safer Internet Day letter:

- Tips, advice and guides for parents and carers from the [**UK Safer Internet Centre**](#)
- ([**saferinternet.org.uk/parents**](https://saferinternet.org.uk/parents))
- Advice for parents and carers from [**Childnet**](#) ([**childnet.com/parents-and-carers**](https://childnet.com/parents-and-carers))
- Reviews and information about games, apps, TV shows and websites from
- [**Common Sense Media**](#) ([**commonsense.org**](https://commonsense.org))
- Help on using parental controls and privacy settings from [**Internet Matters**](#)
- ([**internetmatters.org./controls**](https://internetmatters.org./controls))
- Information and reporting of online grooming or sexual abuse from [**CEOP**](#) ([**ceop.police.uk**](https://ceop.police.uk))