Internet safety with children

In this activity you will go through some of the steps you can take to protect your children online.

**What will I learn?**
- How to manage your computer to help your children be safe
- How to help your children be safe when they search and view content
- How to help your children avoid risks from strangers or bullying.
How do I do it?

Be safe! If you’re using this hand-out on a shared or public computer, remember to:

- Log on using a ‘strong password’: one that includes upper and lower case letters, numbers, and isn’t something that someone else could guess.
- Never share or write down your password.
- Log out when you’re finished.

How can I manage my computer to help my children be safe?

1. The Internet is an amazing resource for your children, helping them interact, learn and have fun from the safety of your home. However, there are also web pages, images and videos that are unsuitable for children, and some strangers online may be a danger to them.

2. Keep Internet-enabled devices like laptops in sight. One simple way to keep track of what children are doing online is to put your computer in a public part of your home, like the kitchen or living room. You’ll be used to keeping tabs on your children from the corner of your eye – and there’s no reason this can’t work when they’re online. Don’t forget that the Internet can also be accessed through mobiles and devices like Apple’s iPad, so be aware of the different web devices your children use.

3. Set ground rules. Be clear with your children about what you expect them to do and not do online, so they know from the outset what the rules are. You can also ask them to show you the kinds of things they spend their time doing online.

The web links referred to throughout this document can be found in the Useful Links section at the end.
4. Your computer probably has security controls that allow you to limit how your children can use it, and when:
   - Go to the Microsoft Windows Parental Controls web link.
   - Watch the video and click on the links to find out more.

How can I help my children be safe when they search and view content?

5. The best way to help your child be safe online is to talk to them and teach them. While some of the solutions rely on technology, you can be their most important source of protection:
   - Be open about the benefits and dangers of the Internet.
   - Let them know that they can always come to you for help, even if they think they have done something wrong.
   - Use the Internet together. Set a good example by being a safe Internet user yourself and teach them how to make safe decisions when browsing and interacting online.
   - Be clear that they must not download files without your agreement.
   - Help them learn from their mistakes.

6. Go to the Google Family Safety Centre web link:
   - Watch the overview video.
   - Click on ‘Google safety tools’ and find out how you can control how your children can search the Internet or watch YouTube videos.

7. You can also use parental control software to limit the web content that your children can view. This can give you extra peace of mind. The best way is to help them develop a safe and responsible attitude.

8. BT has teamed up with McAfee to offer their Family Protection security software free to all BT broadband customers:
   - Search for ‘McAfee Family Protection’ to find out more and to buy and download a copy if you are not a BT Broadband customer.

9. Use the ideas above to help your children to only search for information that is suitable for them, and to learn not to click on links that they aren’t sure about:
   - Encourage them to tell you about what they’ve seen and done on the Internet. Not just any bad stuff, but the good things, too.
   - Make it clear that you’re as interested in their online friends and activities as you are with their school friends and activities.
   - If anything bad happens or if anyone wants to meet up, they should tell you or another adult they trust.
How can I help my children to avoid risks from strangers or bullying?

10. BT has produced the Internet Green X Code to help children. Share these ideas and talk about them with your children:

- **Stop** — Don’t give out any personal details
- **Think** — Things aren’t always what they seem
- **Stay safe** — Spread the word

- When you are out and about on the Internet, there are things and people to be careful of, so Stop, Think and Stay Safe:
  - Don’t give out personal information on the internet.
  - Your full or real name.
  - Your address.
  - Your mobile or home phone number.
  - Your school’s name or address.
  - Your friends’ or family’s personal details.
  - Your favourite places or things.
  - Your photo, or any photos of your friends.
  - Use a nickname when signing up for any online accounts, like email, chat or on a website.

- Remember that things aren’t always as they seem. Some people pretend to be someone else so they can make friends with young people. Not everyone on the Internet has bad intentions, but some do. Question everything:
  - Is someone asking you questions about yourself?
  - If so, why do they need to know these things?
  - Do they get annoyed when you don’t answer?
  - Why are they asking you to talk in private?
  - Remember, people who are tricking you can be very smart. They know all the ways to get your trust. Be extra careful with anyone asking you lots of questions about yourself.
11. Sadly, real-life bullying can spread online, as well as being carried out via mobile phones and devices. A good way to avoid this is to follow the advice above and not use any real personal information when online.

12. Talk to your child if you are concerned that they are being bullied online. The best way to stay aware is if they feel they can talk to you about their online activities and not feel spied upon:

- Don’t get angry. Make it clear they are not in trouble, but you need them to be honest and open so you can help them.
- Work with your child. Many sites have a way to report cyberbullying. If the bullies are from the child’s school, contact the school.
- Save evidence by making print-outs or saving messages or other bullying content, and make a note of the dates and times it happened.
- Don’t respond to the bullies or try to fight back.
- Help your child delete their profile from the site or change their username and profile.

13. Visit the Beatbullying web link to find out more.
Quiz yourself

- What are some of the dangers my child might find online?
- Where is a good place to locate our computer at home?
- What ground rules can I set for my children?
- How can I use the settings on my computer to help my child be safe?
- What advice can I give my child to help them stay safe online?
- What can I do if I think my child is being bullied online?

Try your new skills

- Plan a chat with your children about Internet safety. Make notes on what you will say about ground rules, being honest and open, and the tips you will share about being safe online.
- Think about a ‘public space’ at home for your computer, or how you will encourage them to share what they do online.
- List any actions you want to take to set up the safety features at home.
- Go back to the web links to find out more.

Write down any notes that will help you:

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My learning checklist

☐ I can list and explain some of the dangers my child might find online.

☐ I have created ground rules for how they will use the computer at home.

☐ I have planned how I will work with my children to encourage them to be open and honest about their online activity.

☐ I can think of ways I can remind them regularly to be safe online.

☐ I know how I can use settings on my computer and software to help.

☐ I know how to respond if I think my child is being bullied online.

Top tips

- Print a copy of the BT Internet Green X Code and keep it next to your computer. Why not cut out the three icons on the cover and stick them to your monitor?
- Make talking about Internet safety a regular and informal thing at home – not a big issue.
- Limit your child’s online activities. No more than two hours’ ‘screen time’ per day is a good upper limit.
- Remember to keep up with how your child is accessing the Internet as their Internet use develops.

Where next?

- Visit the BT Internet Green X Code, Beatbullying and Thinkuknow web links with your children.
- Visit the BT Internet safety web link and explore the links to find out more guidance for your child’s age.
- Install and configure parental control or family safety software.
- Read Beginner’s guides 2.2 and 2.3 on Internet safety.
- Find out if your child’s school has a bullying policy that extends to online or phone bullying outside of school.

Write down any notes that will help you:
**Useful Links**

You may want to use these links in your session:

- **Google Family Safety Centre**: http://www.google.co.uk/familsafety
- **Beatbullying**: http://www.beatbullying.org/dox/help/help-for-parents.html
- **Thinkuknow – advice for children from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre**: http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- **Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre**: http://www.ceop.police.uk