

# e-Safety for Parents



Edition 7

## Setting Boundaries

A new school year already? It doesn't seem like a few days ago that I was typing the last newsletter. Well, the children will be back to school now, some just starting, some moving up to big school.

I don't think any parent would disagree that parenting can be difficult. When we were kids our parents set boundaries, some would call them rules. Of course we didn't like these boundaries, we knew better didn't we? As much as we didn't like them

at the time, it's not until you have kids of your own that you realise those boundaries were there for our own good, whether we liked them or not.

Technology comes with its' own challenges, particularly if you don't feel as tech savvy as your child, but some simple stepping stones can go a very long way to helping you help your child.

*Alan Mackenzie*

**Whilst the internet can be a fascinating place, it can also be one of the places that concerns parents the most.**

Any given week can highlight the errors made and issues experienced by others in our digitally connected world. It's true that the internet can pose some unique risks to our children, and adults too, but there are some simple ways we can prepare our children for online life. It's never too soon to talk to your children about how they can keep themselves safe online.

### Setting Boundaries

Rules are an important part of life and one of the few things we will never escape. Before our child goes online it is crucial that we set some simple and clear rules for them to follow.

**Agree time limits.** How long can they play for

before they need to take a break? On some consoles and laptops this can be enforced through parental controls, only allowing them a certain amount of playing time before it will lock them out. An hour then a break would be perfect for children, even though they will probably disagree!

**Talk about sharing.** While adults understand the importance of keeping personal information private, do our children know what can and what shouldn't be shared online? Draw up a list with your child showing what they can't share online and keep it somewhere that they can easily see it. It's also important to encourage them to check with you if they're unsure.

[www.facebook.com/esafetyadviser](http://www.facebook.com/esafetyadviser)

**Agree on sites they can visit.** Make sure you check out new websites that your child mentions - kids will always share what they do for fun online with each other but that doesn't always make the sites appropriate. Parental controls offer the ability to store a list of sites visited, even if you choose not to filter them, so you know where your son or daughter is going online

#### **When they visit a new site**

**Go through the rules.** Any site where you can communicate with others also has rules it expects users to follow to keep the experience positive. Make sure your child knows what they can and can't do, and also where to report users who break those rules

**Blocking.** This is an incredibly important protective feature offered by most sites. Clicking this button can stop another user from contacting your child through the site - a perfect way for your child to manage their own safety. Once they're ready to explore a new game or site, sit with them and find the block and/or report button together. Once they have shown you where it is, make sure they also know when to use it

**Ask who they talk to online.** How do they know them? It might be a good time to remind them about strangers online and to discuss what a friend is.

**Encourage them to be open** when things go wrong online. Children worry that we will stop them using technology if something bad happens, so it's important we talk through issues and remember the positives rather than focusing on a few bad apples. Make sure they know that there are other places and people they can go to for advice; aunts and uncles; grandma and grandad; websites such as Childline and CyberMentors can offer anonymous support and allow them to discuss the issues they are experiencing.

**Don't forget consoles,** tablets and mobile phones. These all have games and apps which allow your child to connect to other people. Should any of these be kept in bedrooms at night?

Worried about YouTube and Google searches? Both sites come with safety features (called Safe Search on Google and Safety on YouTube) to reduce the risk of your child coming across anything inappropriate, accidentally or on purpose!

# Safe as Sam

## Helping you get the message across.

If children are going online, it's never too soon for them to learn some simple safety tips to help them. There are a number of resources which parents can use to educate kids about online risk and, more importantly, what to do when things go wrong.



Smartie the Penguin is a short story for younger children about the importance of asking for help if they get stuck online. It also has a song you can sing together to help them remember the most important top tip - telling a trusted adult if confused, worried or scared:

<http://www.childnet.com/resources/smartie-the-penguin>



Digi Duck focuses on thinking of the consequences before you post. A great book for primary age children, Digi Duck learns first hand the harm that friends can sometimes do when they post embarrassing pictures of others on the internet:

<http://www.childnet.com/resources/digiducks-big-decision>



# Safe as Sam

Lee and Kim: Animal Magic. A short cartoon used by many schools around the country to introduce the 4 important top tips of staying safe online. Join Lee and Kim when they journey into an online game and meet the people behind the characters, including one who may not be who they say they are:



Click or type the following URL, or just go onto YouTube and search “Lee and Kim”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nMUbHuffO8>



CEOP, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, have produced a number of hard-hitting videos for all ages on the dangers of grooming and strangers online. Check out Jigsaw for Junior age children and Consequences for teenagers:

Click or type the following URL, or just go onto YouTube and search “CEOP Jigsaw” or “CEOP Consequences.”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_o8auwnJtqE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE)