

Acceptable Use Policy Appendix 1 Covid 19 Advice for parents

These uncertain times have led to an understandable disruption to family life, with parents and children spending more time than usual at home, and online. Digital devices are providing many benefits, whether it's to help children to continue their education through distance learning, using social media to connect with their friends and relatives, or using technology for entertainment, such as streaming content from Netflix or YouTube.

While all families have their own unique circumstances, **many parents have similar concerns when it comes to their child's use of technology.** How can parents strike the right balance between online and offline activities, and help their kids have a positive relationship with technology, and the internet?

One of the most effective ways to ensure that your child or teenager has a positive experience online is to have an **open, and ongoing conversation** with them. Talk to them about what they do online, and reassure them that if anything happens that they are uncomfortable with, they should not feel embarrassed or afraid to speak to you about it. If your child feels like they can talk to you about their online activities without judgement, or fear of the consequences, it will lead to more honesty, and they will be better equipped to deal with any negative experiences.

For parents of young children, **it is never too early to think about their online safety.** Even if you are only beginning to discover the internet together, have a conversation with them about the important things to look out for, such as who they talk to online, and about sharing personal information.

Parental controls help to reduce the risk that your child will encounter inappropriate content online, and they can be set up on most internet enabled devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets and games consoles. They can also be set up through your internet service provider, and in online services such as Netflix and YouTube.

Parental controls can be used in a number of ways, for example to only allow your child to access age-appropriate content, or to monitor and block their usage. We recommend that parents use, and regularly review and update, parental controls across all devices in the home.

Note: *For parents of young children it's important that there is very close supervision of their online activity*, and that they are only online when you are with them.

Parents can also [set up 'safe search' options on browsers](#), for example if your child is using the internet for homework, and this setting will filter out adult content in search results. Most search engines have free controls in place to help parents.

Parental controls are available on most Internet-enabled devices including computers, smartphones, tablets and gaming systems. **Parental controls can help reduce the risk of your child encountering inappropriate content when they are online.** When enabling parental controls, use age-appropriate settings to filter, monitor and block your child's activities. We recommend using parental controls

especially for younger children on all available devices, computers, and tablets in the home.

Parents should also understand that while parental controls are a good support, they are not 100% effective, therefore it is also very important to talk to your child about using the internet safely.

What can Parental Controls do?

It is important to be aware of the range of parental controls available. They are usually offered by internet service providers, computer operating systems, social networks, search engines, games consoles and more. They also offer different functions depending on the provider, these include:

- Setting specific time limits on your children's use
- Controlling/Blocking games your child can access
- Prevent children from using specific programs
- Manage content children can search for online

Parental Controls from your Internet Service Provider

Setting Parental Controls through your internet service provider can be the easiest way to manage what your children can access across all your devices and computers in your home. This can be done easily and normally for free by most internet service providers. We recommend contacting your provider or checking their website for more information. Please note if your child has a smartphone they use outside the home, you should also consider putting these controls in place on the device also.

Parental Controls on your Computer Operating System

Most computer systems offer easy to follow steps on setting up parental controls which are free to use. Here are links to some of the main providers:

Windows

Windows Parental Controls allows users to set limits on the amount of time spent on computers, the games users play and the programs they can access. To set these up go to windows.microsoft.com/set-parental-control

Apple

Apple's Parental Controls filter can operate in 3 modes (unrestricted, automatic and whitelist). Ensure you choose the most appropriate filter for your child. For step by step info on how to set-up, see: <https://support.apple.com/en-ie/guide/mac-help/mtusr004/mac>

Chrome OS

For Chrome Book users, we recommend setting up **Supervised Users**. Supervised Users allows you to see what sites/pages the supervised user has viewed and also allows you to block sites you may not want Supervised Users to access. Find out how to set up Supervised Users here: google.ie/safetycenter/families/7

Parental Controls on Smartphones and Tablets

Whether your child has access to an Android/Apple smartphone or tablet, parental controls are available across all of these devices. You can turn off functions like in-

app purchasing, social networks, app store access, camera access, Bluetooth and more.

Apple

You can use Restrictions to block or limit specific apps and features on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, including access to explicit content in the iTunes Store. For more information on setting up restrictions on Apple devices go to support.apple.com/

Android

This useful guide from PC Advisor gives step by step information on setting up parental controls on Android devices: pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/

Google Play Store

For Android Phones, we also recommend putting in place controls on the Google Play store.

You can turn on these controls to restrict the content someone can download or purchase from Google Play on your device. Find out how to set up controls on Google Play here: support.google.com/googleplay/

Parental Controls on your Internet Browser

Most internet browsers offer free restrictions to help manage what sites your child can access when online. Find out how to activate parental controls on the most popular internet browsers below.

Google Chrome: google.ie/safetycenter/families

Safari: support.apple.com/

Firefox: support.mozilla.org/parental-controls

Internet Explorer: windows.microsoft.com/using-content-advisor

Parental Controls on Search Engines

Search engines play a big part in what we look at online so it is important to help manage the types of content your child can come across when searching for something online. Most search engines have free controls in place to help parents.

Google Safe Search: <https://support.google.com/>

Bing: <http://www.bing.com/account>

Yahoo: help.yahoo.com/kb/SLN2247.html

Parental Control on Video Sites

YouTube Safety Mode:

YouTube have also recently introduced a free YouTube kids app which may also be worth considering for your child. Find out more about the new app

here: webwise.ie/parents/youtube-kids/

Swipe TV

RTE have a dedicated channel app which is a great source of video content for children including videos, games, TV shows and more. The app is suitable for primary level children. rte.ie/swipetv/

Netflix

You can control access to certain maturity levels of Netflix content from the [Your Account](#) page under [Manage Profiles](#).

Netflix parental controls consist of four maturity levels:

Little Kids – Watch movies and TV shows suitable for all ages.

Older Kids – Watch movies and TV shows suitable for older kids.

Teens – Watch movies and TV shows suitable for teens.

Adults – Watch all movies and TV shows, including mature content.

For more info go to: help.netflix.com/264

Parental Controls on Game Consoles

In many households, gaming can be just as popular or even more popular than spending time online, so it is just as important to protect our children when gaming. The most popular consoles all offer free parental controls and easy step by step guides to setting them up.

Xbox: xbox.com/en-IE/parental-controls

PS4: playstation.com/parental-controls

PS3: playstation.com/playstation-3/

Nintendo Wii: support.nintendo.com/parent

Nintendo DS: nintendo.com/parents

PSP: playstation.com/get-help/

Unfortunately, **there is no magic number for screen time**, and it is worth bearing in mind that children use their devices for lots of different reasons – to learn, create, play, and interact with their friends. Under the current circumstances households are using technology for a variety of purposes, every family is different and may face different demands, however [setting clear boundaries and rules](#) can be an effective way of managing screen time, and also making sure that you **set a good example, and follow those rules too.**

Encourage Respectful Communication

Respectful Communication

Discuss the importance of being respectful to others online, and the impact that their behaviour may have on people. Encourage them to consider the other person's perspective, and how hurtful remarks or actions could make someone feel.

By fostering empathy, and helping them to understand their own boundaries and level of comfort, it will encourage them to become more responsible and considerate users of the internet.

Talk About the Use of Privacy Settings

Privacy

Children and teenagers are documenting and sharing lots of information about their lives online, and may not be fully aware of the potential risks or the impact it may have on their [online reputation](#).

Talk to them about checking their [privacy settings regularly](#). Many social network accounts are 'public' by default, meaning that anyone can potentially see your child's posts or pictures. However, it is a good idea to remind them that even with the tightest privacy controls, content that is posted online can very easily be copied and shared to a wider audience that they cannot control.

Encourage your child to be familiar with the blocking and reporting features on platforms they use. Most websites and social networks provide tools for users to report inappropriate and offensive content.

Join In - Play HTML Heroes together!

The internet is a great resource for children – join in with them and discover the online world together! Why not explore HTML Heroes, and help your child learn about online safety in fun and interactive way?

HTML Heroes: An Introduction to the Internet has 8 lessons that can be easily accessed online from home. Children will learn about internet safety with the help of two animated USB characters called Archie and Ruby, who perform catchy and fun raps about online advertising, screen time, cyberbullying and how the internet works.

Explore Other Resources

Scoilnet

Scoilnet is the Department of Education and Skills (DES) official portal for Irish education. Scoilnet.ie contains a database of over 20,000+ online resources including websites, quizzes, lesson plans, notes, video/audio, games and other multimedia.

World Book

It can be accessed for free in the Republic of Ireland via the Scoilnet website.

A Parents Guide to a Better Internet

A Parents Guide to a Better Internet, is a free Webwise online safety booklet for parents.

It contains advice for parents of children of all ages, and covers topics such as social networking, screen time, cyberbullying, and sexting.

There are simple steps you can take to protect yourself online:

#BeInCtrl:

#Control – No regrets – Keep control of what you share online and with whom. A person you only know online may not be what they claim to be. Anything you send to someone, post online or do over a webcam can be saved/recorded without your knowledge. These images can then be shared anywhere and with anyone.

#Trustworthy – A friend of a friend? Don't accept friend requests from someone you don't know. If someone online says they are a friend of a friend, exercise caution – it is easy to post fake photos or stream a fake video, ask your friend if they have met them in person.

#Reality Check – Be aware of your online presence – think about how your online profile makes you appear to others.

#Location – Put your safety first – don't share your location or meet up with someone you have only met online. Keep your private stuff private – don't share private information such as your address, phone number or school, and use the maximum privacy settings on your social media accounts.

Getting Help and Support

Look for help. You are not alone. Talk to an adult you trust and look for your friend's support.

If someone is threatening to post or share images don't share more images or pay anything.

Keep the evidence, don't delete anything, save messages, take screenshots and record any details you have.

Stop the communication – block the person and deactivate your social media account. Don't delete the account as this evidence will help the Gardaí.

Report the problem to your local Garda Station and/or the Garda Child Sexual Abuse Helpline **1800 555 222**. An Garda Síochána will help you and take you seriously.

They will deal with it in confidence without judging you.

Call Childline on **1800 66 66 66**, text 'Talk' to **50100** or chat online www.childline.ie

For further information on Internet Safety please visit www.webwise.ie