**Staying Safe Online**

The internet is a useful tool for shopping, staying in touch with friends, sharing experiences and exchanging content. However, there are some potential risks such as; Disclosure of private information (either by you or your contacts), Emails and messages that seem to be from friends or social networking sites but are actually luring you to fraudulent sites.

Online fraud and computer misuse crimes are on the rise and can be prevented by making a few small changes in online behaviour.

To avoid becoming a victim of online crime, developing a few good online habits drastically reduces your chances of becoming a victim of cybercrime, makes you less vulnerable and lets you use the web safely.

To reduce your chances of becoming a victim:

* Use a strong password or passphrase, which is at least 12 characters long and contains a mixture of letters, numbers and symbols
* Never give personal or sensitive details out online or over email
* Make sure all devices have up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed
* Keep software and apps regularly updated
* Only download from legal, trusted websites
* Only open emails and attachments from known and trusted sources
* Look for the padlock icon in the address bar when paying for goods or services online – it means the website is trusted and secure
* Check the address starts with https:// whenever you’re asked to enter sensitive information online
* Avoid using public Wi-Fi hotspots that are not secure or ask you for personal information to access it
* Regularly back up your data
* Control your social media accounts – regularly check your privacy settings and how your data is being used and shared
* Be cautious of internet chats and online dating – there’s no guarantee you’re speaking to who you think
* Be extremely cautious if you’re asked for money

Visit Cyber Aware ([www.cyberaware.gov.uk](http://www.cyberaware.gov.uk)) for step-by-step instructions on keeping your devices up to date with the latest security updates, and for more online security advice.

**Online Privacy**

In our data-driven world, it’s more important than ever to know who is using your personal data, and why.

The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights. ICO state that it’s your right to be informed about how organisations are using your data, even if it happens behind the scenes. This includes understanding how people use your data to target you with social media adverts.ICO have created a number of resources to help you understand your rights with regards to your online data.

<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>

ICO have further guidance on social media privacy settings and factsheets on some of the most popular social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Linkedin and Google) to assist you in taking control over how your personal information is used.

<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/be-data-aware/social-media-privacy-settings/>

LSE (London School of Economics) have developed toolkits for young people and also for parents to help them talk to children about their data and privacy online, including data protection, the digital economy and a range of privacy issues.

Toolkit for young people

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/my-privacy-uk>

A toolkit for parents

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/my-privacy-uk/for-parents>

**Staying Safe Online (Children)**

The internet is a fantastic place for children to learn, create and have fun, but they may occasionally have to deal with a variety of sometimes challenging issues.

These might include cyberbullying, the pressure to take part in sexting, encouragement to self-harm, viewing pornography, along with various others. But there are positive things you can do to equip yourself and your child, support them in resolving any issue they may face.

Behind every device that allows and provides connectivity and communication online from social media platforms, gaming, messaging there is a human element, within that element are some who masquerade as someone else, a different gender, a different age group etc. in an attempt to lure, coerce, exploit, intimidate and do harm to our Children and young people.

As a Parent/ Carer, you can find support to enhance your Children or young people’s safety, security and awareness at a time when they will be spending more time online. Please have a look at the links below which are very informative, easy to follow and will provide the opportunity to start the discussion about online safety.

Thinkuknow is the online safety education programme from the National Crime Agency and their website has home activity packs from the ages of 4yrs to 14+yrs to take support from.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>

NSPCC, CEOP and Internet Matters have created a number of advice hubs to help you learn more and deal with these issues with your child. Please click on the following links for more details.

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/>

**Parental Controls**

Parental controls put you in control of what content your child can see. Combined with privacy settings these can help you protect your children from the things they shouldn’t see or experience online.

Internet Matters have guides for step-by-step instructions to set controls on popular entertainment services & search engines.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/>

Internet Matters also have step by step guides to help you set up the right controls and privacy settings on the networks, gadgets, apps, and sites they use to give them a safer online experience.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

**Online Gaming**

Gaming is a great way for young people to relax, socialise with their friends and have fun. Children can play on games consoles, apps or websites, mobiles, tablets, PCs, or through smart speakers and virtual reality headsets. They can also chat to other players using messaging platforms for gamers or watch livestreams of well-known gamers.

You can find out more about the different types of games children like to play on Net Aware ([www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)).

For those with younger family members to think about, online gaming can be a concern. From cyberbullying, to excessive time spent playing games, to unscrupulous games which encourage children to pay for content.

Here are some useful links to sources of information to explain and understand the world of online gaming and encourage children to game safely and responsibly online.

* National Cyber Security Centre Online Gaming Advice

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/online-gaming-for-families-and-individuals>

* Thinkuknow Gaming: What parents and carers need to know.

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>

* Online gaming safety tips for parents (www.internetmatters.org)

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/online-gaming-top-tips-for-parents/>

* Buying a games console for your child (www.internetmatters.org)

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/tech-guide/gaming-consoles-for-children/>

* Review of sites, apps and games (www.net-aware.org.uk)

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/>

**Useful Links and further information**

**Think you Know:** An education programme for advice about staying safe when you're on a phone, tablet or computer. [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

**Home Activity Packs**: Download home activity packs with simple 15-minute activities for your child to support their online safety at a time when they will be spending more time online at home. [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets)

**Internet Matters:** Get expert support and practical tips to help children benefit from connected technology and the internet safely and smartly. [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

**Project Evolve:**Resources to equip children and young people for digital life. [www.projectevolve.co.uk](http://www.projectevolve.co.uk)

**UK Safer Internet Centre:**Promote the safe and responsible use of technology for young people and provide online safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online. [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

**Childline:** Childline is a free and confidential service for children and young people. You can phone them on 0800 11 11 or you can visit their website [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**NSPCC:** If you are an adult and worried about a child you can call the 24-hour NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 or visit their website. [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**ParentLine Scotland:** Call 08000282233 or email: [parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk](mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk) Parent Line's opening hours are from 9am-10pm (Mon-Fri) and 12 noon-8pm at weekends.

**Crimestoppers:** Call 0800 555 111 or visit their website [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

**Police Scotland:** Call 101 for advice and support (or call 999 if you think a child is in immediate danger). [www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)