

Parents' Guide to Online Safety

Cyber Safety

Cyber safety is an important parent-child discussion to revisit frequently, from Early Years through Upper School. Experts warn that children are most vulnerable to online dangers whilst in their own home. The following suggestions are drawn from a wide variety of professional sources and may aid you in effectively guiding your child's use of a tablet or other technology devices.

Outside of school, we suggest that parents bear responsibility for providing the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies and other possibly offensive media. Parents should be responsible for monitoring their child's use of different technologies, including the Internet, if the student is accessing the electronic devices from home or through other remote locations.

Common Sense Media Agreements

The Common Sense Family Media Agreements are checklists that parents can use to guide conversations with their boys about media use. They are designed to help parents establish guidelines and expectations around media use and behaviour that are right for their family. Some families are comfortable using them as signed agreements. Others prefer to use them simply as checklists to guide conversations. Either way, they can help parents and their boys get on the same page about media and technology use. The Family Media Agreements can be found towards the end of this document.

Put the tablet to bed, but not in the bedroom

Parenting experts suggest parking all technology devices, from mobile phones to tablets, in a common family room overnight to discourage late night, unmonitored use and sleep disruption. Don't allow your child to sleep with a tablet, laptop or mobile phone. Remember to model appropriate use and balance of technology in your own life, too!

“Don't allow your child to sleep with a tablet, computer or mobile phone.”

Filter Access

Outside of school, children often have complete, unrestricted access to inappropriate sites on other devices such as home computers, tablets and personal mobile phones. Experts strongly suggest contacting your Internet Service Provider to filter and block inappropriate content on your wireless home network. For example 'Talk Talk' have a product called 'Home Safe' which can be used to filter your home network and even restrict access to social media and gaming at specific times. Google sells an additional product called Google Wi-Fi, which allows control over your home network.

Set Expectations

Regularly share your expectations with your child about accessing only appropriate sites and content, as well as being a good person when online (even when parents aren't watching). Outside of school it is likely that your child has already been confronted with multiple opportunities to access content that parents wouldn't approve, such as pornography, hate sites, celebrity gossip, reality TV, personal blogs and more, all of which may influence your child's beliefs, values and behaviour.

Understand that your child's use of many technologies (such as tablets, video game systems, and mobile phones) is likely to give your child the ability to connect to unfiltered public wireless networks (such as in a library or coffee shop, by picking up a neighbour's wireless signal, or connecting to the Internet through a mobile service). It is important therefore to maintain regular, open dialogue about Internet use and access. Discuss your expectations for appropriate use and behaviour.

Monitor & Limit Screen Time

Experts suggest only allowing children to surf the Internet in a central place at home, such as the kitchen or family room, rather than away from adult supervision or behind a closed door. Know what your child is doing with technology and how his or her time is being spent. Technology can be a great tool and resource, but also has the potential to be a distractor. Help your child learn to focus on completing tasks or assignments first before spending time on games, shopping and social networking. Teaching today's children how to manage multiple sources of information and potential distractions is a critical life skill - one best learned before heading off to college or the workplace. For children it is recommended that, if using for long periods of time, iPads are used on a table or desk and not held close to the lap or body due to the low emission of electromagnetic radiation.

Fortnite and Online Gaming

Age-inappropriate gaming, screen-addiction and intrusive social media are connected to children's emotional and mental wellbeing. But with economic and social connectivity online becoming increasingly ubiquitous, today's young people will inevitably need to develop skills and levels of awareness that could cause us concern. It is therefore important for parents to consider giving guidance to their children.

Setting Allotment of Time

The first consideration is setting a healthy allotment of time that enables your child to take part in:

- Seeing friends and interacting with them in real life
- Participating in extracurricular activities they're excited about
- Keeping up with academic classes and doing homework
- Building positive relationships with family members
- Getting enough sleep

You might like the idea of allowing video games to be played only at the weekend, or you might agree that a smaller amount of time every day — maybe half an hour in the evening — is fine, as long as homework is done first. Whatever you decide, do continue to monitor how your child is doing and don't be afraid to modify the schedule as needed.

Enforcing Limits

As with any discipline you enforce as a parent, setting clear limits is important. Setting limits from the beginning is ideal, but things aren't hopeless if you haven't done this yet. Make sure whatever limits you do decide to establish are made clear to your child, and make sure that you stick to them. Children will learn pretty quickly that you'll relent and give them an extra 20 minutes of screen time when they throw a tantrum, even if you only give in one out of every four times. Remember that with video games you're up against a potent competitor, and stick to your own guns.

Behavioural Issues

It is recommended parents should also monitor their children's behaviour when they are playing video games, especially social ones like Fortnite. The advice usually given is to start by explaining the difference between good-natured everyday talk, which is fine, and bullying, which isn't. Warn children that the things they are saying while they are playing can have real life consequences. Someone could take a screen capture of what your child is saying in chat, or record audio, or a friend's parent could even be in the room overhearing what he is saying. Then things can escalate. There are a few lessons here. The first is that children shouldn't feel like the rules are different in games or online. In video games when children are feeling competitive and their adrenaline is boosted, it can lead to them saying things they wouldn't normally say face-to-face. But the ordinary rules of conduct should still apply. This is also important because the habits children develop while playing video games can generalise into other settings, like school.

Here are some additional things to review:

- Anything you do or post online creates a digital record, often called a "Digital Footprint." Nothing online is totally private, even if it is intended to be. Once digitised, it can be saved, sent and re-posted.
- A good rule of thumb: If you don't want a parent, teacher, principal, future employer or University/college admissions office to know something, don't post it online.
- "Friends" aren't always who they say they are; undercover police and paedophiles pretend to be children online. Encourage your child to be friends online only with friends they know in person.
- Use caution when posting personally identifiable information online. This includes: full name, address, phone number, email, where you are meeting friends or where you hang out. Discuss with your child how easy it is for someone to find you based on what you post online.

- Regularly check your privacy settings on all commonly used sites and networks. Ignoring privacy settings on sites like Instagram, Snap Chat, WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook means your photos, contact information, interests and possibly even cell phone GPS location could be shared with more than a billion people.
- Cyberbullying (threatening or harassing another individual through technology) is a growing concern. It takes many forms, such as forwarding a private email, photo or text message for others to see, starting a rumour, or sending a threatening or aggressive message, often anonymously. Report any forms of cyberbullying to the relevant authority.

Information adapted from:

1. www.common sense.org
2. <https://childmind.org/article/parents-guide-dealing-fortnite/>
3. <https://habyts.com/>

Other useful websites:

1. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
2. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

Agreement Year 1 to Year 4

I will ...

stay safe.

- I will not give out any private information, such as my full name, date of birth, address or phone number, without my family's permission.
- I will keep my passwords private and only share them with my family.
- I will tell a trusted adult if anyone online makes me feel uncomfortable, sad or unsafe. I will recognise that my safety is more important to my family than anything else.
- _____

think first.

- I will communicate kindly when I use the Internet or my cell phone. I will not tease, embarrass or bully others.
- I know that the Internet is public, and I will respect myself and others when I'm using it.
- I will not pretend that I created something that's not actually my own work.
- _____

stay balanced.

- I know that not everything I read, hear or see online is true.
- I will respect my family's decisions for what I'm allowed to watch, play with or listen to, and when.
- I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.
- _____

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- recognise that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying "no."
- talk to me about my interests and help me find stuff that's appropriate and fun.

X

signed by me

X

signed by my parent

Agreement Year 5 to Year 8

I will ...

stay safe.

- I will not create accounts or give out any private information – such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number or photos – without my family’s permission.
- I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts or profiles.
- If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable, or acts inappropriately toward me online, I’ll stop talking to that person and will tell a friend or family member I trust about it.

think first.

- I will not bully, humiliate or upset anyone online or with my phone – whether through sharing photos, videos or screenshots, spreading rumours or gossip, or setting up fake profiles – and I will stand up to those who do.
- I know that whatever I share online or with my cell phone can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.
- Whenever I use, reference or share someone else’s creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.

stay balanced.

- I know that not everything I read, hear or see online is true. I will consider whether a source or author is credible.
- I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- recognise that media is a big part of my life, even if they don’t always understand why.
- talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying “no.”
- talk to me about my interests and embrace my world, including helping me find media that’s appropriate and fun.

X

signed by me

X

signed by my parent

Dulwich Prep Home Online Behaviour Guide

Example guidelines for online access at home

1

Time Limit Rules

- Limit screen time at home
- Screen time only allowed at the weekends
- Set a 1 hour screen limit for study time and 1 hour screen limit for leisure

2

Detox Rules

- No screens after 7pm
- Screens only used for homework in the week
- One night a week without any screens

3

Device-Down Rules

- No devices in the bedroom an hour prior to bedtime
- Only one screen type allowed at the weekend – mobile, tablet or laptop
- Set an internet time limit of 1 hour access a day

4

Task First Rules

- Complete all school assignments before screen time
- Read a chapter of your book before gaming online or offline
- Complete house chores before screen time at the weekends

5

Physical Activity Rules

- Play outside for an hour a day before screen time
- Take up a new sport and practise every day before screen time
- Take part in physical activity on Saturday morning before weekend screen time

6

Device-Free Family Rules

- Have a central place where all devices are used and charged
- Agree a device-free evening; host a family game or time instead
- No devices at the dinner table